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New York

President:	Mr. Jayakumar	(Singapore)
Members:	Bulgaria	Mr. Tafrov
	Cameroon	Mr. Chungong Ayafor
	China	Mr. Zhang Yishan
	Colombia	Mr. Valdivieso
	France	Mr. Levitte
	Guinea	Mr. Fall
	Ireland	Mr. Corr
	Mauritius	Mr. Koonjul
	Mexico	Mr. Aguilar Zinser
	Norway	Mr. Kolby
	Russian Federation	Mr. Granovsky
	Syrian Arab Republic	Mr. Wehbe
	United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland	Sir Jeremy Greenstock
	United States of America	Mr. Cunningham

Agenda

The situation in Africa

Ad hoc Working Group on Conflict Prevention and Resolution in Africa.

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02-39516 (E)

The meeting was resumed at 4.05 p.m.

The President: I should like to inform the Council that I have received letters from the representatives of Cape Verde, the Central African Republic, Ethiopia and Malaysia, in which they request to be invited to participate in the discussion of the item on the Council's agenda. In conformity with the usual practice, I propose, with the consent of the Council, to invite those representatives to participate in the discussion without the right to vote, in accordance with the relevant provisions of the Charter and rule 37 of the Council's provisional rules of procedure.

There being no objection, it is so decided.

At the invitation of the President, Mr. Da Fonseca (Cape Verde), Mr. Poukré-Kono (Central African Republic), Mr. Hussein (Ethiopia) and Mr. Hasmy (Malaysia) took the seats reserved for them at the side of the Council Chamber.

The President: The next speaker inscribed on my list is the representative of Sierra Leone. I invite him to take a seat at the Council table and to make his statement.

Mr. Kanu (Sierra Leone): I would like to thank the Security Council, and in particular you yourself, Sir, for organizing today's debate and for inviting Sierra Leone to participate in it, and to express my delegation's satisfaction at seeing you preside over such an important meeting.

Our appreciation also goes to the Chairman of the ad hoc Working Group, the Ambassador of Mauritius, for his initiative.

Since this is the first time my delegation is taking the floor since the election of the new members of the Council — Bulgaria, Cameroon, Guinea, Mexico and the Syrian Arab Republic — we would also like to salute their election and to wish them all success in the fulfilment of their arduous mandate.

Today's debate certainly attests to the Security Council's commitment to seeking long-term solutions to the problems of Africa. The report of the Secretary-General on the causes of conflict and the promotion of durable peace and sustainable development in Africa — which was considered by the General Assembly, the Security Council and the Economic and Social Council — contains a series of specific as well as broad recommendations on issues ranging from post-conflict peace-building to the mobilization of resources for development. We also salute the importance of the follow-up work of the Open-Ended Ad Hoc Working Group of the General Assembly on the Causes of Conflict and the Promotion of Durable Peace and Sustainable Development in Africa.

The causes and solutions to conflicts in African countries are nearly always linked to a wider, regional problem of instability. The Council needs to maintain its attention, as it has done in the past, on the overall regional problems. West Africa, in particular, is a region where the intricate net of individual conflicts, fed by poverty, has heightened the risk of the region becoming the world's first failed region.

Sierra Leone has preoccupied the Council over the past few years, but today I can assure you that, thanks to the constant involvement of the United Nations, the Sierra Leonean people have been given hope. The imminent establishment of the Special Court and the peacefully held presidential and legislative elections are testimony enough to encourage the Council to further support the peace process.

However, as long as the situation in neighbouring countries, such as Liberia and Guinea-Bissau, remains dire, the threat of instability spilling back into Sierra Leone is still very real. Equally, the huge number of refugees and internally displaced persons still on the move in a number of countries in West Africa troubles us.

In that sense, it has always been our view that the efforts of subregional organizations, such as the Economic Community of West African States, in the context of Chapter VIII of the Charter are absolutely essential and that cooperation should be given a very practical focus. Indeed, the subregional organization's efforts must continue to be enhanced. The Council should not, however, concentrate only on conflict. It ought to properly integrate all the economic, social and political problems that create conflict and poverty.

Sierra Leone wishes to acknowledge the support provided for certain African initiatives to resolve disputes. In this respect, we would like to pay tribute to the United Nations Development Program for its contribution to the Mano River Women's Peace Network.

Another example is the work of the United Nations Development Fund for Women towards gender

mainstreaming in its peace programme in East Africa, Central Africa and the Horn of Africa, facilitating women's participation in peace and reconciliation meetings and negotiations, and supporting their involvement in advocacy for peace. We strongly encourage its further development in the rest of the African region.

The report of the Secretary-General on the causes of conflict and the promotion of durable peace and sustainable development in Africa highlighted the critical nexus between peace and development and advanced a comprehensive and integrated approach to conflict prevention, poverty eradication and development. That approach has been accepted by the international community, including African countries themselves, as a framework for the provision of support to Africa.

Indeed, Sierra Leone, based on its own painful experience, confirms that peace, democracy and good governance are prerequisites for sustainable development in any African country.

One of the elements contributing to violent conflict in Africa is the rapid accumulation, illicit sale and indiscriminate use of small arms, which aggravate conflict situations. Indeed, in Sierra Leone, the illicit trade in arms and diamonds has shown to be a major element fuelling the conflict.

An effective way for the United Nations to assist African countries in the area of peace-building is to combine measures in support of peace-building and longer-term development in a comprehensive and coherent response. A critical element of forging national reconciliation and social cohesion is to promote a culture of peace, and the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization has a leading role in that field. We can only agree with the importance of disseminating the culture of peace among parliamentarians and members of the armed and police forces as well, in particular when many of them were ex-combatants and joined a reintegration programme.

The public service is weak in a country that has experienced years of civil war, not to say sometimes non-existent, and strengthening those countries' capacity is one of the critical contributions that the United Nations — especially this Working Group — can make in assisting these countries to direct and manage their own development. The work of the Economic Commission for Africa in enhancing the administrative capacity of African countries is commendable.

Building the capacity required for the consolidation of democratic practices and institutions is also of crucial importance.

The importance of creating small- and medium-sized enterprises in Africa in order to increase the employment prospects of the underemployed and unemployed needs to be given continued attention.

While special school feeding programmes are very positive initiatives that help both boy and girl students to learn in better conditions, special efforts are still needed to get more girls to enter school and to improve their attendance, thereby eliminating a form of discrimination.

In conclusion, the Sierra Leone delegation wishes to emphasize again its belief that the regional approach to the prevention and resolution of conflicts is an efficient one that requires thorough cooperation with the subregional and international community.

The President: The next speaker inscribed on my list is the representative of the Gambia. I invite him to take a seat at the Council table and to make his statement.

Mr. Grey-Johnson (Gambia): I congratulate you, Sir, for convening this important meeting, to allow us share our ideas with you on what the Security Council, the Economic and Social Council and the ad hoc Working Group might do severally and collectively, to more effectively address the problems of peace, security and development in Africa. They are the real challenges that face the continent and the ones on which we feel the United Nations must concentrate if it is to be of meaningful service to African countries. We must also recognize that the problems of peace and security and the problems of development are in fact two sides of the very same coin. That is why we are gratified that the Economic and Social Council and the Security Council have decided to come together to address them jointly. We also know that it is mainly for that reason that it has been decided to set up the United Nations Office for West Africa under the dynamic leadership of Ibrahima Fall, whom we wish well as he takes up his duties in Dakar.

At this very moment, there is jubilation in Sierra Leone for the smooth conduct of presidential and

parliamentary elections, signalling a full transition from conflict to peace and democracy. We extend our congratulations to the Government and people of Sierra Leone. The Security Council also deserves our commendation for the role it played in stabilizing the situation and in getting the warring factions to choose the political rather than the military route in the pursuit of their objectives. We also congratulate the Department of Peacekeeping Operations, as well as the United Nations Mission in Sierra Leone (UNAMSIL) and its dynamic leadership, for staying focused on the ground, despite the adverse odds and many challenges that they faced, and for prosecuting their mandate to a successful outcome in record time — a not-too-common occurrence in United Nations peacekeeping.

I should very quickly like to raise a number of issues that might cut across some of the areas proposed for consideration at this meeting.

Let me start with the situation in the Mano River Union. There is a need for the United Nations perspective on the Mano River question to be broadened in order to realistically address the problem. Accordingly, not only should the offices of the two Special Representatives of the Secretary-General in Monrovia and in Freetown be rationalized, but also moves should be made to incorporate the Guinean dimensions of the problem into present programmes. Perhaps the time has come for there to be one Representative office for the Mano River Union. An expanded mandate for UNAMSIL along those lines might best meet that need.

On a related matter, I should like to address the issue of mercenaries in West Africa. A large number of mercenaries from all over the subregion have been involved in the conflicts in West Africa. They participated very actively in Sierra Leone and Guinea and are now back in Liberia. There is a need for the United Nations to formally recognize the existence of this group of actors in the various conflicts, with a view to designing and implementing appropriate programmes to address them as an important factor in our search for a durable peace in the subregion. At present nothing is being done to demobilize them, as was the case with the combatants in Sierra Leone. In fact, we have evidence to show that when the situation calmed down in Sierra Leone many of the mercenaries fighting with the RUF moved over into Liberia to join the various militias in the fighting that picked up recently in that country. When this conflict does come to an end, is it not likely that this army of mercenaries will move over to another country in the subregion to ply its trade? My Government has been drawing attention to this problem for a long time now and would sincerely wish that something be done without any further delay to address it.

We firmly believe that the United Nations, perhaps along with ECOWAS, must take up this issue seriously. It must first begin by finding out who these people are, how many of them there are, where they came from, who recruited them and for what purpose. Then the United Nations should proceed to design appropriate interventions to have them effectively demobilized and eventually fully reintegrated into their various communities. These interventions should include a more concerted effort to deny them and the militias they fight for access to the arms that keep them in business. In this regard, arms manufacturers and exporters in the West should be held more to account and be made to be more selective, more judgmental and more responsive in their arms and ammunition transactions with African buyers.

The time has come for United Nations peacekeeping to be more proactive so as to prevent conflicts before they flare up. At present the United Nations appears more equipped to react to conflict situations, much like closing the doors after the horses have left the stables. The case of Guinea a couple of years ago amply demonstrates this shortcoming. Although everyone knew for many months before it happened that Guinea was poised to fall victim to rebel attack, there were no perceptible efforts on the part of the United Nations to prevent that from happening. The current situation in Madagascar, and the Security Council's reaction to it, is another good case in point. At present, there are many countries throughout Africa that are displaying all the signs of a flare-up. The United Nations must strengthen its ability to keep a close watch on those countries and to intervene in order to reduce, and eventually, diffuse the existing tensions.

As part of its peacekeeping activities, the United Nations should seek to encourage and support initiatives by individual Member States to prevent or resolve conflicts. It is true that the United Nations supported the intervention of ECOWAS in Liberia and Sierra Leone. It should strengthen its partnership with that intergovernmental organization, as well as with others, such as the Community of Sahel-Saharan

States, the Intergovernmental Authority on Development and so on. It should show solidarity with them and increase their confidence and capacity to handle conflict in their respective areas.

Equally, bilateral initiatives taken by certain States to address conflict situations in their neighbourhood deserve to be supported in concrete ways. For example, my country's peace programmes for Guinea-Bissau and for Cassamance in southern Senegal could be significantly bolstered, given the many resource constraints that we face, if systematic material and financial support of the United Nations were more forthcoming.

Post-conflict support has been something of an enigma for the United Nations. It would appear that in many cases, we seem to be in a hurry to move out, once there are signs that the conflict may be coming to an end. The Central African Republic some years ago is a good case in point. I know that there are those who would be in a hurry to begin pulling the United Nations Mission in Sierra Leone (UNAMSIL) out of Sierra Leone, now that a smooth transition from conflict to democracy has been made in that country. That would be a grave error. Post-conflict Governments must be assisted with confidence-building measures, as well as with the requisite deterrents, to ensure that the situation does not slide back into chaos. Peacekeeping mandates should, therefore, not cease with the cessation of hostilities. Rather, they should be sustained well into peacetime and be adjusted as necessary to fit the prevailing circumstances and needs for sustainability in each country.

Finally, post-conflict interventions must include strong capacity-building programmes. Typically, countries emerging from conflict are left with significantly weakened capacities. Institutions are destroyed and human resources are decimated. Perhaps the greatest damage done to a country in conflict is the erosion of its skills base through the brain drain — the flight of skilled people. Whereas physical infrastructure can be rebuilt in a relatively short period of time, replacing lost skills requires a lot of time. The absence of that vital input very often stalls recovery and frustrates development. Perhaps the Economic and Social Council should come up with innovative measures to replace the large pool of skilled manpower lost to African countries, not only as a result of conflict, but also as a consequence of the adverse economic conditions prevailing in many parts of the continent. Technical cooperation among developing countries may be one way to address the need. Another would be a focused programme of assisted voluntary return to bring back the many professionals and highly skilled people who have left the African continent and now live in the West.

These were the few points I wanted to contribute to this discussion.

The President: I call on the representative of Tunisia. I invite him to take a seat at the Council table and to make his statement.

Mr. Mejdoub (Tunisia) (*spoke in French*): The Tunisian delegation wishes to thank you, Sir, for planning and presided over this formal meeting of the Security Council devoted to Africa.

I also wish to congratulate Ambassador Koonjul, Chairman of the ad hoc Working Group on conflict prevention and resolution in Africa, for his commitment to Africa. We are convinced that, thanks to his professional and human qualities, the work of this Group will be crowned with success.

My delegation supports the mandate of the ad hoc Working Group on conflict prevention and resolution in Africa. Of course, the statement of the President of the Security Council of 31 January 2002 contains very interesting recommendations and suggestions that pave the way for the future action of the Working Group. We also believe that the activities of the Group should be part of the implementation of the recommendations contained in the Secretary-General's report on the causes of conflicts and the promotion of sustainable peace and development in Africa. The analysis and the recommendations in that report are still very relevant four years later.

While expressing our gratitude for the document that was prepared in order to facilitate this discussion, allow me to stress the following points.

We attach great importance to cooperation between the Security Council and the Economic and Social Council. Their participation in the Security Council meeting held on 29 January 2002 on the situation in Africa shows how beneficial the interaction between these two main organs of the United Nations is when we are talking about the maintenance of international peace and security in their political, economic and social dimensions, which themselves generate development within a context of stability.

Cooperation and interaction between these two organs can fit perfectly into efforts to prevent armed conflicts and to build peace before and after conflicts.

In the course of its presidency of the Council in February 2001, Tunisia suggested for the Council a discussion on peace-building, being convinced that peace is not simply the absence of armed conflicts or declared hostility. Peace is rather something that has to be built, with the combined efforts of all United Nations bodies, in order to establish with foresight the foundations for peace or to build peace following a conflict.

I would like to express our support for the establishment of an Economic and Social Council advisory group on African countries emerging from conflict and express the hope that the Security Council ad hoc Working Group will cooperate closely with the Economic and Social Council advisory group.

The Special Representatives of the Secretary-General play a very important role when it comes to preventing conflicts and also in the field of peace-building. Often placed at the head of support offices of the United Nations for peace-building, the Special Representatives of the Secretary-General already have a certain number of achievements to their credit. These include support given to Governments to build peace, fostering national reconciliation, strengthening democratic institutions, providing a framework to harmonize the United Nations peace-building activities in the field and facilitating the mobilization of international political support. There is also the collection of arms and assistance for their destruction, and facilitating communication between Governments, neighbouring States, regional organizations and bilateral donors. Within this context, my delegation supports the adoption of new institutional arrangements, with a view to making the role of the Special Representatives of the Secretary-General in Africa more effective.

Regional and subregional organizations have an important role to play in the area of conflict prevention and peace-building after conflicts. Chapter VIII of the Charter provides an ideal framework for cooperation and coordination between the regional organizations and the United Nations, in particular the Security Council and the Secretary-General. Because of their geographic proximity and their better knowledge of the unique situations that they cover, regional organizations could be a rapid early warning centre for the United Nations. They are sometimes better equipped in order to determine the right time for the Council to act. Most of the conflicts that take place in Africa in this post-cold-war period are domestic conflicts; and thus we feel that it is crucial to strengthen the institutional abilities of the Organization of African Unity (OAU), support its Mechanism for Conflict Prevention, Management and Resolution and help the OAU in the area of training, increasing its participation in United Nations activities and initiatives and promoting joint United Nations-OAU initiatives. Modalities for this cooperation have to be strengthened through the implementation of appropriate strategies in the area of cooperation and permanent mechanisms, including early warning, conflict prevention, peacekeeping and peace-building. It is also important to include the subregional organizations, such as the Community of Sahel-Saharan States (CENSAD), the Intergovernmental Authority on Development (IGAD), the Southern African Development Community (SADC) and the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS). It is undeniable that these subregional organizations constantly contribute directly to resolving internal conflicts and inter-State conflicts in Africa; and therefore they must be heeded by the Security Council whenever dealing with a conflict or tension in the regions that they represent.

The efforts and initiatives of ECOWAS in the Sierra Leone conflict and in Liberia are well known. The CENSAD has also contributed greatly to resolving the conflict between Ethiopia and Eritrea and the internal conflict in the Central African Republic. This regional organization has also undertaken mediation between the Central African Republic and Chad, as well as among the different Somali factions. This experience needs to be acknowledged by the Security Council, as these are mechanisms able to contribute to conflict resolution.

Lastly, we must point out in this context the matter of the lack of resources within the OAU and subregional organizations – namely, when it comes to being able to play their role in conflict prevention, peacekeeping and peace-building. The role of regional organizations can be crucial, especially when it comes to designing exit strategies after peacekeeping operations. Once the conflict is resolved, the long-term plan and peace-building could be entrusted in the field

to subregional mechanisms that the United Nations must assist politically and financially.

Peace depends on economic and social development. Despite the unquestionable progress that we have seen in recent years, the situation in many regions in Africa remains alarming. Africa has not been able to radically break with all matter of ills that still plague it. The continent has the largest number of least developed countries: 34 out of 49. This critical situation is worsened by the burden of a severe debt, low levels of savings and investment, the depreciation of the prices of commodities, reductions in official development aid, as well as insufficient levels of foreign direct investment.

The New Partnership for Africa's Development (NEPAD) reflects the Africans' desire to take the future of their continent in hand. NEPAD clearly expresses how Africa, in association with the rest of the world, could finally begin to tackle the enormous challenges that face it. The implementation of NEPAD is of great importance, and we are convinced that, if we want to put an end to the vicious circle of conflicts, violence and instability in Africa, the Working Group must seek to make itself aware of the economic and social causes of conflict whenever it looks at a given situation on the African continent.

It is this relationship between peace, security, stability and development that should, in our opinion, always be at the very basis of every treatment of a conflict in developing countries, and in Africa in particular, where it has been amply shown that every intra-State or inter-State conflict also has economic and social causes and implications. This is a reality with which we have to contend from now on.

Now I would like to quote a wonderful statement by Mohatma Gandhi, who said that "Poverty is the worst form of violence and insecurity". The Security Council has the right and the duty to recall this to the international community.

The President: As I said this morning, it is my intention to allow a Council Member to respond after several non-Council member statements. Accordingly, I now give the floor to the representative of Ireland.

Mr. Corr (Ireland): May I first thank you, Mr. Minister, as other colleagues have, for presiding over our meeting and thank Singapore for convening this important meeting of the Council on Africa. It is important, because, following our earlier meeting in January, a discussion such as this offers to Council members, to the wider United Nations membership, and to the United Nations family of institutions, including the Economic and Social Council, the opportunity to stand back from day-to-day consideration of issues and engage in a genuine dialogue and exchange of views on wider issues and give a strategic focus to the policies we have both in the Council and within the United Nations.

First, before responding to some of the points made in the course of our discussion, I want to warmly thank on behalf of my delegation Ambassador Koonjul for his work in establishing the Council's ad hoc Working Group — a theme picked up by most speakers so far. We have made a very good start in the Working Group. We have a very good programme of work. Over the coming period, I think that the Working Group can bring both focus and richness to the work of the Council in terms of the way we approach issues, but also in terms of a wider sense of engagement with institutions within the United Nations, with African organizations, with the non-governmental organization community and with other actors involved.

I would also like to welcome Ambassador Šimonović, the President of the Economic and Social Council, since it is important that the Security Council, given the extent to which its engagement with African issues is critical to its work, have the chance for partnership and dialogue with the Economic and Social Council.

Therefore, the establishment by the Council of the ad hoc Working Group on conflict prevention and resolution and the envisaged Economic and Social Council advisory group on African countries emerging from conflict can play a very important role in partnership with each other. This will be important in bringing an extra dimension to the work of both the Economic and Social Council and the Security Council. The establishment of both groups will, one hopes, strengthen not just the level of United Nations engagement on African issues but also international engagement.

These themes are important for a number of reasons. I think they came from many speakers this morning because of the critical need for the United Nations, the Council and the international community

generally to focus on Africa and the challenges facing it.

There is a phrase in the New Partnership for Africa's Development (NEPAD) on the need for bold and imaginative thinking. This is something on which we in the United Nations, after many years, need to adjust our thinking as we approach issues in Africa. In the context of NEPAD and of new thinking in the Organization of African Unity (OAU) and throughout Africa, we need to look again at the way we approach issues of conflict, peacemaking and peace-building to see how we can bring strength and coordination, but also new thinking.

Several speakers have rightly made the point this morning that each situation in Africa is different. The situations in Ethiopia-Eritrea, Burundi, the Democratic Republic of the Congo, as we saw during the Council mission to the Great Lakes region, and Madagascar all have their own particular circumstances, and each therefore calls for a strong emphasis on regional cooperation, not just in the context of the OAU but the subregional organizations.

The Council Working Group — and the same is true, I think, of the Economic and Social Council group — can, in dialogue with the OAU and the regional organizations in Africa, bring an extra dimension of reflective thinking to the situation as we approach it.

Ambassador Dauth of Australia made the point earlier not only that peace and development are two sides of one coin, but also that there is much new thinking. It is reflected in the OAU. It is reflected in the Cotonou Agreement between the European Union and our African, Caribbean and Pacific (ACP) partners. They have helped bring together security, economic, humanitarian and military issues. We approach the different requirements of regional conflicts in a way that brings together the different dimensions that are needed in addressing the conflict and also the instruments of development cooperation that are later needed to help resolve it and ease tension.

I think there were three or four themes that I did want to look at briefly, because they came out very strongly in the contributions made this morning.

The first is institutional issues. It is clear that one of the weaknesses in the United Nations approach over recent years has been that there has been a failure of partnership at times between the United Nations and the OAU and regional organizations. There is blame on all sides for that, but there is now a very real opportunity in terms of the OAU structures and the new ideas that will be going to Durban that we heard of this morning to look at ways in which we can seriously engage, jointly, in approaching both pre-conflict and conflict situations in Africa. There are various ideas put forward on how to do this: joint missions between the Council and the OAU, the sharing of information and documents, special briefings, joint special envoys, and bringing in subregional organizations such as the Intergovernmental Authority on Development, the Economic Community of West African States and the Southern African Development Community into this framework.

What is certainly true is that there is very substantial room for working together, and this is an area where the new Council Working Group will be able to play a major role in a way that has not been possible up to now. So when the Council does look at different situations it will do so with deep knowledge of where African countries themselves are coming from and where, as Ambassador Kanu of Sierra Leone just said, we have a serious knowledge of the regional implications and what this means.

The Mano River countries are a very good example where, as several speakers have emphasized, it is very difficult to consider one country — Sierra Leone, for example — in isolation from what is happening in the neighbouring countries. This is true of many of the countries in Africa where conflict or the potential for conflict may exist.

The second point on the institutions is to look at ways of strengthening the mediation capacity of the United Nations, including fact-finding missions and special representatives. We can look at various new mechanisms for doing this, but there is an important requirement to look at new possibilities to add to the range of instruments that the Council and the United Nations have at their disposal.

The point on the Economic and Social Council has already been made strongly by several speakers and is absolutely true. Up to now, over the past 5 to 15 years, as the Council has become increasingly engaged in African issues, it has at times appeared to lack a serious partner and interlocutor on the economic and development side. There were always, of course, the

funds and programmes and specialized agencies, but the importance of the Economic and Social Council in this is to bring that extra dimension of pulling threads together and providing a concept of partnership both to the Council and to the OAU and regional organizations in Africa as to what is possible and the range of actions that can be jointly undertaken.

One point that did come up this morning, raised by Assistant Secretary-General Fall and which I also wanted to mention, is the issue of sanctions. That is an important issue for the Council at the moment, partly because of the number of countries in Africa where there are targeted sanctions in operation through Council action. The point on this, which I think has been made by several speakers this morning, is, first, the need for sanctions not only to be targeted but to be focused so that their humanitarian impact is limited, but also, as Assistant Secretary-General Fall said, so that there is the possibility of an exit strategy when circumstances are appropriate. There is a phrase to the effect that when change is not necessary, it is not necessary to change. That conservative dynamic can sometimes apply to institutions as well.

It is therefore important to remember that when, for political reasons — in terms of the impact of sanctions regionally and on particular countries — and for reasons of justice, a decision has to be taken about sanctions, it should be remembered that, even when applied in a very limited way, sanctions can sometimes be a blunt instrument. There I think the partnership and dialogue that the Working Group and the Economic and Social Council can advance with the OAU and regional organizations would be important.

The New Partnership for Africa's Development (NEPAD) makes the point on development issues that the challenge facing Africa in this area is enormous. It is not simply the inability to harness globalization. It is not simply the technology gap that has developed. But, as several speakers have said in our discussion, it is the range of problems such as lack of trade access and, despite the Heavily Indebted Poor Countries initiative, the problem of debt. These are two sides of one coin. It is very difficult to address underlying causes of conflict without offering people the opportunity for economic and social development.

Therefore, as is emphasized in NEPAD and has been emphasized by most speakers today, the issue of development, while it is not a direct responsibility of the Council, is of critical importance to Council action in terms of pre-conflict or conflict situations or of peacemaking operations. There the dialogue with the Economic and Social Council will be of critical importance to the work of the Working Group in looking at implications of Council actions on development and vice versa.

The issue is especially important, I think, because one of the themes that struck me during the Council mission to the Great Lakes region was the disconnect between what happens in development and the actions undertaken by the Council. For example, in the Democratic Republic of the Congo, where we had a briefing on the economic and social situation, we heard about the results of the Consolidated Appeals by the United Nations agencies. I think that something like one-sixth of what is required has been provided so far for the current year. That makes it extraordinarily difficult.

On the one hand, you have the United Nations Organization Mission in the Democratic Republic of the Congo (MONUC) and the prospects for disarmament, demobilization, rehabilitation and reintegration, and you have the role of the Council in fostering and encouraging peace and dialogue, while on the other hand you have enormous problems of economic and social development. Logically, in terms of action by the United Nations family, these have to be considered as two sides of one coin.

There are two final points that I also want briefly to pick up on. One is arms, which has been emphasized by several speakers. Clearly, in Sierra Leone there is a very good example of this. We need to continue to highlight the importance of disarmament and arms control initiatives in conflict prevention. This is something that in the Working Group we can seriously look at in the period ahead.

The final point is the role of NEPAD, which of course will be considered at the G-9 Summit, at the World Economic Forum in Durban and beyond. The issues at stake with NEPAD are, without exaggeration, of fundamental importance to the future of Africa. They will affect every aspect of policy, of development, of conflict prevention. They will require the closest cooperation and coordination by the international community. They will require the engagement of all United Nations institutions, including the Council in terms of its own role. It will

also require a sense of focus and clarity so that, as African countries themselves put in place structures of cooperation that advance good governance, economic policies in terms of trade, and new codes of action, the international community will respond in a reciprocal way so that the challenge that is now being undertaken by African countries is met fully and adequately by the international community. If it is not, as NEPAD emphasizes, it would be extremely difficult for the people of Africa or African countries to do this on their own.

In conclusion, I think that all the points made this morning emphasize the need for greater focus on partnership and cooperation among the Security Council, the Economic and Social Council and African regional and subregional organizations, African countries and civil society. But it is also a critical point that in advancing this goal we also need to ensure that, with respect to the development component, the United Nations, the Bretton Woods institutions and the international donor community are brought together so that, as we tackle challenges in one critical area, we provide the people of Africa and African organizations with the resources to advance both goals at the same time.

The President: I now call on the representative of South Africa. I invite him to take a seat at the Council table and to make his statement.

Mr. Kumalo (South Africa): Allow me, Sir, to begin by thanking you for presiding over this meeting today. It is no accident that this issue has come before you, because your Ambassador Kishore Mahbubani was a Vice-Chairman of the General Assembly's Open-Ended Ad Hoc Working Group on the Causes of Conflict and the Promotion of Durable Peace and Sustainable Development in Africa, and he did us proud even then.

I also wish to express my delegation's appreciation and thanks to Ambassador Koonjul of Mauritius, Chairman of the Security Council's ad hoc Working Group on Africa, for the terms of reference and other proposals before us and for his commitment to the issues of African peace and development. It is also gratifying that the President of the Economic and Social Council and the Permanent Observer of the Organization of African Unity were also invited to participate in this meeting.

It is realistic to accept that the Security Council will always be faced with issues that are beyond its mandate. My delegation has on previous occasions urged that the Security Council review its relationship with the Economic and Social Council. We are pleased that this effort is continuing, and we remain convinced that how these two main councils of the United Nations work together will go a long way towards addressing some of the challenges that we face in Africa.

We endorse the recommendation that the Security Council's ad hoc Working Group on Africa should maintain effective interaction with the Economic and Social Council ad hoc Advisory Group on African Countries Emerging from Conflict to be established during the substantive session of the Economic and Social Council this July. The cooperation between these two Working Groups will help create a useful instrument for addressing conflicts in Africa.

Article 24 of the United Nations Charter confers on the Security Council primary responsibility for the maintenance of international peace and security. But conflicts in Africa are complicated and cannot be resolved only by using the tool of peace and security. These conflicts in Africa are rooted in poverty and underdevelopment, and they result in the displacement of millions of people and the destruction of the social infrastructure within those countries. These are just two issues which fall outside the mandate of the Council. However, we believe that the mandate of the Council is premised on the broader framework of the United Nations and not in isolation from it. That mandate includes maintaining peace and security through arrangements with regions and subregions as specified in Chapter VIII of the Charter.

It is for that reason that the primary objective of the New Partnership for Africa's Development (NEPAD), as a central programme of the Organization of African Unity/African Union, is to eradicate poverty in Africa and to place African countries, both individually and collectively, on a path of sustainable growth and development, thus reversing the marginalization of Africa in the globalization process. In other words, NEPAD is about Africans resolving African problems.

NEPAD has identified three elements of achieving comprehensive peace and security in Africa. They are: promoting long-term conditions for development and security; building the capacity of

African institutions for early warning, and enhancing Africa's institutional capacity for the prevention, management and resolution of conflicts; and institutionalizing the commitment to the core values of NEPAD, which are peace, security, democracy, human rights and sound economic management.

My delegation believes that, if effectively managed, the ad hoc Working Group on Africa has the potential to facilitate interaction between the Security Council, the Economic and Social Council and, indeed, the entire United Nations system in helping Africa rebuild its capacity to manage all aspects of conflict. Africa has the structures in place to provide effective support to the Security Council's ad hoc Working Group on Africa when it is ready to engage. The proposals already made by Ambassador Koonjul are providing the international community with a good basis for further work in developing adequate strategies for conflict prevention, resolution and management in Africa.

In conclusion, I recall that in the earlier part of this meeting, the representative of France raised the important issue of partnership between the Security Council and African countries with respect to conflict resolution and peace-building. We agree with the representative of France that very sensitive issues are often raised in this relationship. However, we would encourage the Security Council to continue to be open to the views not only of the countries in conflict, or even of those that have taken sides in a conflict: the Council, in carrying out its mandate for peace and security, must continue to be willing to hear the views — no matter how contrary — of the countries that have an interest in conflicts or are affected by their spread. In the past few years, the Council has begun a very commendable practice of visiting countries and regions that are engulfed in conflict. We believe that that is a good practice that should be followed wherever there is conflict. We believe that such visits allow Council members to observe first-hand the impact of the decisions and the resolutions that are adopted in New York. That, indeed, is a good thing.

The President: I thank the representative of South Africa for his kind words addressed to my delegation.

I now give the floor to the representative of Nepal, whom I invite to take a seat at the Council table and to make his statement.

Mr. Sharma (Nepal): Thank you, Mr. Minister, for convening this open Security Council meeting on the work of the ad hoc Working Group on Conflict Prevention and Resolution in Africa and for presiding over the debate. Singapore deserves our appreciation for this innovative debate, in which Africa's peace and security problems are put in perspective, in which Council members speak only occasionally and in which most of the speaking is done by non-members of the Council.

The Secretary-General's report on the causes of conflict and the promotion of durable peace and sustainable development in Africa, contained in document S/1998/318, puts the issue before us in context. Today, Africa is in deep crisis. While its natural bounty has attracted colonizers and prospectors from far and wide and has made some of them fabulously rich, most of its people are caught in a vicious circle of poverty, illiteracy, disease and conflict. That, together with the colonial legacy, bad governance, injustice and greed, offers a potent recipe for instability and underdevelopment in Africa. It is untenable, and we must collectively change it.

First and foremost, African leaders will have to show leadership in transforming Africa from a land of conflict into a land of construction. It is a happy development that they have already taken two major steps that are vital for Africa's lasting peace and progress: they have pledged themselves to promoting peace, democracy and freedom, and they have launched the New Partnership for Africa's Development (NEPAD) to reduce poverty and to bring renewal and growth to Africa.

Never before have African nations had so much faith in freedom and democracy and so much awareness and resolve to invest in their people and in their development. As the African countries spearhead their respective specific efforts to resolve conflicts, to improve governance, to mobilize resources and to strengthen service delivery systems, they have also formed regional and subregional mechanisms to pool their resources for collective peace and progress. But their problems are too complex and their poverty too deep for them to be able to address those problems individually and regionally. Therefore, the United Nations, along with other stakeholders in the international community, ought to continue to encourage African countries to initiate regional and subregional cooperation where there is none and to

reinforce it where it exists, so that they can increasingly shape their own destiny.

The United Nations has already been extensively engaged in Africa through its peacemaking and peacekeeping missions, its humanitarian assistance and its New Agenda for the Development of Africa in the 1990s. Its peace missions, barring a few, have helped to manage conflict and to bring peace in many lands, and its humanitarian assistance has benefited millions of refugees and other needy Africans. Likewise, the New Agenda and the United Nations System-wide Special Initiative on Africa have placed Africa firmly at the top of the global development agenda.

However, Africa, like other needy areas elsewhere, requires more United Nations involvement. Nepal therefore urges the world body to mobilize more of its own resources and to play a stronger advocacy role to help African States to achieve durable peace, to protect their people and to invest in tackling poverty, illiteracy and disease, including HIV/AIDS and malaria, which are now devastating the whole continent. To come to grips with those problems, African countries — particularly the least developed among them — need more aid, deeper debt relief and more investment. They also require improved access to global markets so that they can join the process of globalization.

The Security Council deserves full appreciation for establishing the ad hoc Working Group, chaired by the very competent Mauritian Ambassador Koonjul, to respond to some of the pressing imperatives of Africa. The Group has shown its commitment and competence by convening a brainstorming session and by drawing up its broad programme of work. This is certainly an encouraging beginning and I congratulate Ambassador Koonjul on it.

Yet, formidable challenges remain for the Working Group. The issues identified by the Ambassadors of Singapore and Mauritius in their letter of 13 May 2002 are useful and relevant, but on the one hand, they entail close cooperation and partnership between the General Assembly, the Security Council and the Economic and Social Council, which are largely lacking at the moment, as well as between the United Nations and regional and subregional organizations; and on the other hand, they do not cover the entire gamut of issues, which include the humanitarian assistance and sustainable development necessary to ensure effective conflict prevention and resolution in Africa.

Indeed, durable peace and security for Africa, as we have reiterated umpteen times in the hallowed chambers of the United Nations, call for a comprehensive approach that includes all these elements. Hence, there is no doubt that United Nations organs and other relevant bodies must seamlessly cooperate to fulfil the overall goals of the United Nations.

If the United Nations is to be able to grapple with the problems of peace and security, we will have to look at these issues in a more holistic manner. We must ask how we can revitalize each United Nations organ so that it can fulfil its own specific mandate better and, at the same time, work together with other organs on the cross-cutting issues, as the founding fathers of the United Nations envisaged. This basically entails agreement, first, among the United Nations organs on the modality of cooperation, coordination and coherence that will ensure full understanding of each other's sensitivities and respect for each other's mandate in a collective effort. Critical to the success of such an arrangement will be the involvement of all key stakeholders in all phases of the planning and execution of a comprehensive plan of work of which conflict resolution would be only one element, albeit a very important one.

We encourage the Security Council to pay careful attention to these rather sensitive aspects and to work in such a way that other organs do not feel excluded or marginalized. To address this issue, the Presidents of the General Assembly, the Security Council and the Economic and Social Council, supported by regional group chairmen and the Secretariat, could agree on a *modus operandi* that, if necessary, could be firmed up by the adoption by those organs of identical resolutions. Perhaps similar arrangements might be in order later between the United Nations and regional and subregional organizations.

The conclusion of the brainstorming session and the programme of work presented by the Working Group provide a sound basis for developing such a framework within the United Nations, as well as across the regional and subregional bodies. While too much detail is likely to entangle us in procedure, adequate conceptual and procedural clarity will be essential to erecting a stable edifice of inter-organ cooperation on

complex issues of a multidisciplinary nature, such as conflict prevention and resolution.

Nepal is committed to working for such greater cooperation and coordination between the General Assembly, the Security Council and the Economic and Social Council, as well as between the United Nations and regional and subregional organizations. We are also in favour of clearly, though not cumbersomely defined rules of the game so that the stakeholders can all engage in seamless cooperation to help Africa and to achieve the United Nations goals without our being drawn into turf battles.

The President: The next speaker inscribed on my list is the representative of Nigeria. I invite him to take a seat at the Council table and to make his statement.

Mr. Apata (Nigeria): Nigeria conveys its gratitude to you, Sir, for personally presiding over the deliberations of the Council this afternoon. We want to thank the delegation of Singapore and Ambassador Mahbubani, whose interest in Africa has always been outstanding. Up until last January, he was the Co-Chairman of the Open-Ended Ad Hoc Working Group of the General Assembly on the Causes of Conflict and the Promotion of Durable Peace and Sustainable Development in Africa, and he has brought that commitment into the work of the Security Council. We thank him very much.

We also want to thank the Ambassador of Mauritius for the outstanding work he has been carrying on in the Council since the election of his country to membership, and in particular in his capacity as Chairman of the ad hoc Working Group on Conflict Prevention and Resolution in Africa.

This morning, we listened to Ambassador Kébé speak about the involvement and role of the Organization of African Unity (OAU) and cooperation with the United Nations. We heard his proposals and briefing about what the OAU is trying to do in the establishment of peace and security. We agree with the thrust of his statement.

These issues are not new to Assistant Secretary-General Ibrahima Fall. For over 30 years, he has been very active on all these issues in Africa Hall in Addis Ababa, in Geneva and here in New York. He has always brought clarity and focus to all the issues he has dealt with and we are sure that he will bring all this to his new responsibilities as Special Representative of the Secretary-General for West Africa. There could be no better appointment, because he is known in West Africa. The doors will open to him in all capitals and that will facilitate his assignment.

I want to depart from my written statement in order to react to some of the comments that were made this morning, particularly by Assistant Secretary-General Ibrahima Fall, Ambassador Koonjul and the Ambassador of France. Let me start by saying that the format that the Council has adopted today is extremely useful to our deliberations in order for us to listen to non-Council members and, as appropriate, for Council members to react. In this manner, we can have a dialogue and exchange of views, which will hopefully reach the Council's informal consultations and its future decisions in matters relating to conflict prevention and resolution in Africa.

Therefore, let me focus on a few issues that Ambassador Koonjul asked us in his letter to focus on. The first issue I want to deal with is the role of subregional leaders and organizations. I am separating them into two categories — regional and subregional leaders and regional organizations — because they are not one and the same. They interlock but they are different. The Ambassador of France, Ambassador Kébé and Assistant Secretary-General Fall extensively covered this issue in its different aspects this morning.

Let us say first that most conflicts are resolved by the efforts of African leaders themselves, without prompting by anybody. This has been going on for years; it is going on now and will continue. A number of regional leaders in Africa — Presidents Mbeki, Konaré and Bongo and even my own President — have always been active in continuously trying to solve different problems in Africa. Some of them are resolved without anyone noticing, without even reaching the public's eye. Because of the nature of this open meeting, one cannot name countries, soldiers or the nature of such conflicts, but these leaders have been successful in persuading other leaders before elections that they should not run for office but should instead allow for an easy transition in their country. That is part of the ongoing efforts that they are making.

With respect to their quiet interventions, the challenge we need to face is how do we feed information on such interventions into the work of the Council? How do we get what they are doing on an ongoing basis fed back to the Council. I am just raising

these questions for the reflection of Council members. One role the ad hoc Working Group on Africa will have is to feed ongoing work in Africa into the work of the Council.

If we do this, we can avoid the type of problem that Ambassador Levitte mentioned this morning, where African leaders are active, planning efforts in one particular direction, and the Council is acting in another. We then have to resolve the contradiction. So, the challenge for the ad hoc Working Group is to work in collaboration with the Secretary-General and to identify the particular leaders across Africa who are actively engaged in some of these issues and feed whatever they are doing into the work of the Council. Nigeria is willing to assist the ad hoc Working Group, at least in regard to what we are doing, to feed the Council information of this kind.

The second point is in relation to the collaboration between the United Nations and subregional organizations. Ambassador Kébé focused on the OAU. I will not focus on that. We are happy that the United Nations has been able to establish a framework for cooperation with the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS). It is working very well. Only a couple of weeks ago, the Executive Secretary of ECOWAS was here to hold discussions with members of the United Nations Secretariat. What one would have loved to see is for the leaders of these organizations to be involved in this type of meeting today because they play a role. If, in the future, the Executive Secretaries of ECOWAS, SADC and others can be invited to participate in this type of deliberation, it will be extremely useful.

Let us briefly discuss the question of preventing conflict following elections. Ambassador Levitte raised that question this morning. He stated that the immediate cause of conflict can be the holding of elections and the acceptance or non-acceptance of election results. He suggested that perhaps it is necessary for the United Nations and the OAU to have joint election monitoring units in place. I would support that initiative. I would even suggest that we start not three months but six months before the election and increase the number of United Nations and OAU officials we send into the field as the election approaches. Let us start working on that because it is surely cheaper for us to spend the type of money needed to prevent conflict than to mount a peacekeeping operation in the aftermath of an election. We do not know what will happen in Madagascar. Because peacekeeping operations are full-fledged operations, if we mount one, we will spend an enormous amount of resources doing so. It is crucial for the ad hoc Working Group of the Security Council and the advisory group of the Economic and Social Council to work together in planning this type of election monitoring support and observation, particularly as some of the aspects will impact on human rights, freedom of the press and so forth.

On the question of drawing down peacekeeping operations, in places where we have peacekeeping operations, peacekeeping forces have been rapidly drawn down immediately after elections were held. We need to exercise caution and be patient because the holding of elections does not guarantee peace. It is just the beginning of a process: a process of peace-building. We must try to avoid war in the Central African Republic. I say this also with reference to Sierra Leone, where an election was recently concluded. We in Nigeria see that as the beginning of a process. We urge the Council not to precipitately withdraw or draw down forces. One should draw them down as the situation improves, while doing so in consultation with national and subregional leaders, who are involved in the peace-building process there. We urge you do so. To use a British saying, we should not be penny wise and pound foolish.

On the question of the New Partnership for Africa's Development (NEPAD), to which Ambassador Baali and Ambassador Kumalo of South Africa referred earlier on, I will flag only one aspect of NEPAD. The African leaders have committed themselves to not accepting in their midst those who take power by unconstitutional means. They will only accept democratic leaders. In this regard, they have established what they call peer review: if you do not behave well, you are not welcome in our midst. I think they have introduced an important concept. They have also said that African leaders will not be accepted if they are seen to be manipulating the constitutional process in order to extend their time in office. That is one of the problems that brings about the conflicts that the Council is concerned with. African leaders need to be commended for that initiative.

Lastly, on the role of the Special Representative of the Secretary-General in resolving conflict, the choice of Assistant Secretary-General Ibrahima Fall, as I stated earlier, is commendable because he knows the

terrain. All doors will be open to him. He will be able to interact with the various heads of State in our subregion. He will, therefore, be able to propose solutions to some of the conflicts.

I want to make some practical suggestions to the Council. There are a number of Representatives and Special Representatives of the Secretary-General in West Africa: in Sierra Leone, Liberia, Guinea-Bissau, and of course the Office recently established in West Africa. It would be useful for all of them to meet occasionally to compare notes on what is happening there, because the conflicts seem to be interrelated. The situation in Sierra Leone is related to the situation in Liberia. Liberia is related to Sierra Leone and to the Mano River Union. The Representatives can bring their collective wisdom to bear, share information and then decide what needs to be done. I think it will be useful.

I also believe it is necessary for the Special Representative for West Africa to regularly consult, not only with the ECOWAS secretariat and the chairman of the authority of ECOWAS, but also with ECOWAS leaders who have plans to act on a particular conflict. I am referring to timely intervention. As I said earlier, the Special Representative has many contacts, which will help him accomplish these tasks for the Council.

Let me briefly explain what I thought should be part of the role of the ad hoc Working Group. I am not trying to define its mandate, but I think we should draw a lesson from the Counter-Terrorism Committee, whose working methods would be useful for the ad hoc Working Group. Because we cannot meet all the time with Council members in this type of forum, it would be useful for the ad hoc Working Group to meet occasionally outside the Chamber with members of the African Group and with the general membership of the United Nations as the situation demands.

Sir Jeremy Greenstock (United Kingdom): Thank you, Mr. President, for guiding us again today in what I think is proving a very interesting debate. I congratulate first those who have participated in it. I think that we are moving the subject forward in a way that would be not nearly as productive if we were sticking to our written text. I congratulate Ambassador Apata of Nigeria for abandoning his written text, leaving it with us because it makes some good points, and making even better ones in his ad lib intervention. A lot of good points have been made. We got off to a good start with the interventions of Ambassadors Koonjul, Šimonović, Kébé and Assistant Secretary-General Fall. There was a lot of meat in all their interventions. I want to draw out one or two points, perhaps touching, as Ambassador Levitte did, on one or two sensitive areas.

First of all, the ad hoc Working Group is a good idea. Ambassador Koonjul is taking it forward in exactly the right sort of way. But the proof of it has got to be that it makes a difference, just as the proof of a better relationship between the Security Council and the Economic and Social Council — which is another area that has got warm support from everybody who has spoken so far — has to be that coordination in New York and indeed with Geneva, where it matters, makes a difference on the ground. Sierra Leone is a very good example of this, a peacekeeping operation that has covered much wider areas than straight peace and security. But it has needed the input of different agencies.

The way we work in New York has to reflect the results that we need in the field; that is the point of doing it. I think a good example is one which Ambassador Šimonović and others have drawn attention to — Sierra Leone and Gambia were quite clear on this — and that is the gap between the end of a crisis and the beginning of normal development. It is an area that we have begun to point to, but it was only when the Secretary-General established a particular office for Afghanistan that we had somebody responsible for the recovery period. This is something that the United Kingdom has been looking for and which we have been talking about in theoretical terms for a long time, and indeed starting to seminar on. But lo and behold, it has begun to happen in Afghanistan. Why is it not yet happening in Africa?

I think our relationship with the regional and subregional organizations has rightly come out as a very necessary theme. I am very glad that the African Union is going to establish a Peace and Security Council, which will give the kind of links that we want to have with the African Union — a very practical utility. I very much like the approach in Ambassador Kébé's speech, where he makes points A to D on his page four of what the mechanism of coordination between the Security Council and the African Union or the Peace and Security Council should actually cover. We should note his focus, because it is first of all rightly typical of the African approach, but it is also something we must pay attention to on funding and on

the evaluation of humanitarian needs and of recovery and reconstruction needs — all areas on which the Security Council is not necessarily the primary player. So we need horizontal coordination. We need vertical coordination with other bodies that are our sisters in this and with the main players, the regional players, the subregional players. That is the grist to the mill of cooperation between the Security Council and the Economic and Social Council.

I am very pleased that there is warm support for that. As everyone knows, we the United Kingdom have been pushing for it for a long time, and the establishment of an ad hoc advisory group of the Economic and Social Council is going to make that much more practical. I do not see why we should not have — I would have no objection — in at least some meetings of those ad hoc or advisory groups members or one member of the other sitting in the sessions so that there is immediate cross-seeding of the ideas in both groups.

I continue to be very interested in the whole area of governance, which Ibrahima Fall spoke of at some length, as have others. It is remarkable how Africans themselves are now talking about governance. It is the key to a new era of progress, in my view, on dealing with African problems. I want to point to a little contrast that I noticed between what Ambassador Kumalo said about the New Partnership for Africa's Development (NEPAD), that this is about Africans solving African problems, and what Ambassador Sharma of Nepal said as an interested outsider looking at Africa, that — I paraphrase — the weight of African problems all coming together is too great for Africans alone to bear.

How do we put those two things together? I suppose that one answer is to say, as we often feel on the Security Council, that we are all Africans now. But there is a political sense in which Africans must take the lead in solving African problems. The important thing about NEPAD is not only that the document recognizes for Africans the whole gamut of things that need to be done, but that Africans are also, as African leaders, inviting outsiders to come in on a partnership to solve those problems. If we follow Ambassador Kumalo's formulation, we are being invited to become Africans in solving the problems of Africa. I think that is the frame of mind in which the Security Council established the ad hoc Working Group.

But there is also this trade-off, if you like, or interface between conflict and development. I was particularly struck by Sierra Leone's intervention on this, strongly put from a strong recent experience. Peace, democracy and good governance are prerequisites for sustainable development, and the causes of conflict and their solutions are nearly always linked to aspects of wider regional stability.

The fact is that it is only since the Security Council has taken on board that conflict resolution is an aspect of development that we have begun to develop working methods that have a chance of solving the concatenation of problems that conflict and development produce. This is why it is not only just a good thing, as a matter of coordination, that we should be working with the Economic and Social Council and with other organs of the United Nations; it is absolutely essential if we are to have an effect on the ground in resolving the problems that hit both conflict resolution and development. What the Ambassador of Benin said for the African Group on this is relevant. Frankly, what the European Union has done by way of analysis and action on this — as the interventions of Spain and Hans Dahlgren, the Special Representative of the European Union to the Mano River Union demonstrate — is extremely important and is an area with which we will continue.

To sum up, what the United Kingdom is interested in out of all of this is results on the ground, better coordination to that end, continuing the institutional progress that we are making in debates of this kind, and learning the lessons not just of our failures, but also of our success stories. We must do a "lessons learned" exercise on Sierra Leone, the latest success story to date, and apply those lessons, if necessary, to the Great Lakes region, which for Africa must now be gotten right, first of all by Africans, but also with us supporting them.

We must take up the cross-cutting issues. AIDS is one such issue. AIDS was not our subject first of all, yet it was the Security Council that gave political impetus to the fight against HIV/AIDS, something we may have to come back to when the Economic and Social Council takes it up later this summer. Also, there is the matter of support for the New Partnership for Africa's Development (NEPAD), which we are all talking about. But, as Ibrahima Fall said so clearly in his intervention, what matters now is follow-up.

Disarmament, demobilization, reintegration and repatriation or resettlement (DDRRR) is a matter of follow-up and is something we have not yet got right in Africa, because we do not look at the "RRR" aspects of demobilization. Many other delegations have underlined this, because they are looking for implementation of the analysis that we have all done. They are looking for results.

So we will follow up this debate. We are setting aside time during the United Kingdom presidency in July for an Africa workshop which will build on what we learn in this debate, so that it does not just get left in reports on Council members' shelves or in their capitals as something ephemeral. Rather, it will lead to something that we take up, implement the sensible elements of, move forward in coordination about and produce results on, so long as we are working under the leadership of Africans who know what they want and invite those who want to help to do it with them. That is what we are talking about.

The President: Before giving the floor to the next speaker, I would like to note that we have 19 remaining non-members inscribed to speak. In addition, several Council members have indicated their desire to respond. This is an important topic that we are debating, and it is my intention to give every speaker the opportunity to put across his or her views. But, given the long list of speakers, I am sure that everyone will agree with me that we have a common interest in not finishing our discussion too late. If possible, I hope that speakers will attempt to be as brief and focused as possible, without, of course, leaving out any important points that they may wish to put across.

The next speaker is the representative of Senegal, whom I invite to take a seat at the Council table and to make his statement.

Mr. Fall (Senegal) (*spoke in French*): Senegal welcomed the Security Council decision taken following its public meeting last 29 and 30 January to set up an ad hoc Working Group on Conflict Prevention and Resolution in Africa. The Group is fortunate to have the Permanent Representative of Mauritius as its Chairman.

Sir, I should like to congratulate you warmly on assuming the presidency of the Council. We greatly appreciate your personal commitment to continue the work of your predecessors in the presidency. I should also like sincerely to thank all other Council members for doing their utmost to make the issues of Africa their mission.

Regrettably, it has now become a ritual that whenever we discuss the situation in Africa we hear the same hackneyed descriptions: it is a poor neighbourhood on the edge of the planetary village; it is a small, forgotten spot in the world, where the worst horrors pile up one on top of the other — armed conflicts, countless refugees and displaced persons and the apocalyptic ravages of HIV/AIDS. Faced with these tragedies and their dreadful consequences — and the Africans themselves are primarily at fault — the United Nations has to reflect, together with us, on "new and innovative initiatives" — to use a favorite expression of the Secretary-General — because this could eliminate or at least significantly reduce the suffering of people in Africa.

Turning more specifically to the issue of conflict in Africa, regional institutions are firmly committed to seeking political situations with, of course, the irreplaceable assistance of the United Nations. Thus, in Angola, Burundi and the Great Lakes region, for example, there are encouraging prospects, and those countries may soon regain the joy of stability, peace and development.

The role of the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) in maintaining peace and stability is well known, and is recognized even here in the Security Council. Here, the most eloquent case is that of Sierra Leone, where elections have just been held with the support of the international community, and to its great satisfaction.

Turning to the work of the ad hoc Working Group — fortunately chaired, as I said by the Permanent Representative of Mauritius — we congratulate its members on the alacrity and seriousmindedness with which they began their work, thus opening up new prospects for the Security Council to reduce tension and to ensure the intelligent management of conflicts. In that spirit, Senegal fully endorses the approach taken by the Group: that it should look in depth at how to integrate the Economic and Social Council, the new United Nations Office in West Africa, in Dakar, the Organization of African Unity (OAU) and civil society in working on strategies for a new kind of productive partnership.

The vital cooperation and coordination between the Working Group and the ad hoc Advisory Group on

African Countries Emerging from Conflict will be crucial in bringing about an improvement in the working methods of the various United Nations structures and in enhancing the coordination of their activities. My country attaches the greatest importance to diligent consideration of the Secretary-General's recommendations in the relevant reports, particularly with respect to Guinea-Bissau and the Central African Republic.

On the subject of conflict prevention, I would like, just as the Foreign Minister of Senegal has done, to highlight the enlightening example of Guinea-Bissau. This is a typical case of a country where there is every indication of social chaos. Yet, the international community, sitting by as spectator, is waiting for the criteria of good governance and transparency to be met before taking action. The Government and the people of Guinea-Bissau are making enormous efforts to get their country out of crisis. We reiterate our urgent appeal to the entire international community, including the Bretton Woods institutions, to quickly provide the necessary assistance to Guinea-Bissau, as well as to the Central African Republic, to the Democratic Republic of the Congo and soon to Madagascar, to help them solve problems relating to the functioning of their institutions and to the implementation of the disarmament, demobilization and reintegration process. Also, Senegal truly believes that, with valuable input from the Special Representative of the Secretary-General for West Africa, Mr. Ibrahima Fall, Guinea-Bissau can soon find its way back to the path of growth and development.

Senegal would like to draw the attention of the ad hoc Working Group, and of the Special Representative of the Secretary-General for West Africa to a scourge that has become endemic in many African countries, particularly in West Africa. I refer to the proliferation and illegal trafficking in small arms; this is very widespread and has an impact on the stability, security and development of countries in the subregion. The ad hoc Working Group, working with the Office of the Special Representative for West Africa, could really help countries more effectively to mount the various initiatives under way at the national and subregional levels, if not at a continent-wide level.

Senegal supports setting up a working partnership with the main subregional players in priority areas such as early warning, strengthening human resources, capacity building, development and the processes of disarmament, demobilization, and reintegration.

While the Working Group works to implement its programme of work, it is essential that there should also be functional support and participation on the part of all partners in civil society. The international community believes that civil society is extremely important here as a fully fledged partner. It ensures a breadth of representation that must be encouraged.

Senegal believes that conflict settlement and the eradication of poverty in Africa is not something that can be done by governments or public institutions alone. The international community has to take account of, and more deeply involve, other groups and sectors, such as women, youth, the elderly, non-governmental organizations, trade unions, private enterprises, transnational corporations, and so forth.

Experience shows that the only way out of conflict is to enable people to fully and freely enjoy peace, socio-economic security and human rights. This means that political leaders and others at the decision-making levels must respect the principles of a state of law based on democracy and good governance.

The Organization of African Unity (OAU) is now becoming the African Union and with the adoption of the New Partnership for Africa's Development (NEPAD) there are hopes for the future. These hopes have three anchors: the credo of the crucial responsibility of Africans themselves, the essence of the partnership and the belief in mutual respect. NEPAD, in addition to economic, financial and commercial opportunities, is also a globally integrated strategic framework for freeing Africa from the disasters that it suffers from: endemic poverty, bad governance, fratricidal conflict, and so forth.

This is why Senegal fully endorses continually strengthening the cooperation among the United Nations, the OAU the and subregional organizations in the areas of conflict prevention, management and settlement. Once the Dakar office is up and running, we hope the ad hoc Working Group will visit West Africa to learn at first-hand about the situation there.

I now conclude by repeating what the Secretary-General said: "Armed conflict is the worst enemy of development." Further, His Holiness, Pope John Paul II, reminded us that "development" is the other name of "peace".

The President: The next speaker is the representative of Ukraine. I invite him to take a seat at the Council table and to make his statement.

Mr. Kuchinsky (Ukraine): My delegation warmly welcomes you, Sir, to the presidency of the Security Council. We would like to thank the delegation of Singapore for organizing this important debate. We commend its unremitting efforts to introduce an outreach approach in the work of the Security Council in order to increase its transparency and credibility by seeking input from all of the United Nations membership. The background documents, which have been helpfully prepared by the presidency to facilitate today's constructive discussion, deserve our high appreciation.

I wish also to thank Ambassador Koonjul of Mauritius, a devoted initiator and the chairman of the Working Group, for his very useful briefing on the Group's activities. Our thanks also go to Assistant Secretary-General Ibrahima Fall for his very important and forthright statement today.

I would also particularly like to welcome the presence at this meeting of the President of the Economic and Social Council, Ambassador Ivan Šimonović, and the Permanent Observer of the Organization of African Unity (OAU), Ambassador Amadou Kébé, as they represent major partners of the Security Council in the areas of conflict prevention, resolution and peace-building in Africa.

We support the ideas that were presented to us concerning ways of enhancing cooperation with the Working Group in pursuing common objectives within each body's mandate.

I have the honour today to speak on behalf of a country that has always been committed to strengthening relations of true partnership with Africa. This commitment of ours was confirmed by substantial participation on the part of from Ukraine in the United Nations peacekeeping operations in Africa, by our consistent position in the Security Council, and by our ongoing efforts to expand and foster bilateral relations with African countries and to strengthen interactions with regional organizations.

Today, our attention is devoted to the activities of the ad hoc Working Group on Africa, which we consider a useful, proactive mechanism of the Security Council. My delegation endorses the concept that the Working Group on Africa should assist the Security Council in addressing the conflict situations on that continent. With regards to specific elements of the terms of reference and the programme of work, I would like to make some brief comments.

As far as the participation at the meetings of the Group, we support the importance of inviting major institutional, financial and academic views to address specific conflict situations. At the same time, we believe it would be useful if participation could be extended, as appropriate, specifically to the parties to the conflict and to troop-contributing countries.

Welcoming in principle the establishment of groups of friends for specific conflict situations, we consider that such groups should be open to anyone who does make and can make a constructive contribution to the resolution of conflict. With regard to the setting up of groups of friends for African conflict situations, we support a greater involvement of African actors in such endeavours.

We also recognize the importance of effective cooperation and coordination between the Working Group and other existing, relevant mechanisms within the United Nations, in particular those in the General Assembly and in the Economic and Social Council.

Now that the Group is focusing on confidence building in the Mano River Union, it is vitally important that closer contacts be established between the United Nations Office in West Africa and the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) in order to consider ways of strengthening cooperation between the countries of the Mano River Union and supporting ongoing subregional peace initiatives. We wish every success in promoting these objectives to Assistant Secretary-General Ibrahima Fall, who is going to take up responsibilities as the head of the United Nations Office in West Africa.

In conclusion, I wish to express the hope that this brainstorming session today will provide additional impetus to the activities of the ad hoc Working Group on Africa and ensure an effective role for the Security Council in the maintenance of international peace and security in Africa.

The President: I now call on the representative of Morocco, whom I invite to take a seat at the Council table and to make his statement.

Mr. Loulichki (Morocco) (*spoke in French*): I should like to begin by thanking you, Sir, for having taken the initiative of organizing this debate under your competent presidency, a debate in which Africa is once again at the centre of the Security Council's attention.

I should also like to welcome the presence of Ambassador Jagdish Koonjul, Chairman of the ad hoc Working Group; of Mr. Ibrahima Fall, Assistant Secretary-General in charge of the United Nations Office in Dakar; and of Ambassador Ivan Šimonović, President of the Economic and Social Council, whose contributions will enrich and enlighten our current and future discussions.

The sustained attention of the Security Council and of the United Nations system in general that Africa now enjoys is all the more reassuring in that it is now shared by the entire Council. That is also the result of the daily and persistent action of the Secretary-General, who has fostered an international awareness of Africa and who spares no effort in giving the continent hope for a better future.

We are pleased that this debate is taking place at a juncture marked by encouraging prospects for conflict settlement, particularly in Angola and Sierra Leone and between Eritrea and Ethiopia. As a member of the African family, my delegation is glad to participate in this debate, which concerns the role, the functions, and the programme of work of the ad hoc Working Group on conflict prevention and resolution in Africa. That Group, established three months ago, was given the mandate of monitoring the implementation of the successive recommendations of the President of the Council with regard to conflict prevention and resolution in Africa. The nature and the scope of that mandate poses, at first glance, the problem of a possible overlap between the Group's activities and those of the General Assembly's working group charged with the application of the recommendations contained in the Secretary-General's report on the causes of conflicts (S/1998/318).

Despite the informal nature of the ad hoc Working Group, a delineation of the fields of action of both bodies seems desirable in order to ensure the rationality and the effectiveness of United Nations action in this area. We believe it is indispensable that there be complementarity between the tasks of the ad hoc Working Group, those of the General Assembly and those of the Economic and Social Council.

For any action undertaken by the Council in the area of conflict prevention and management in Africa, the Secretary-General's report of 13 April 1998 remains the indisputable reference, inasmuch as it contains a detailed analysis of conflicts and of their deep-rooted causes, and it proposes realistic and achievable recommendations to put an end to them. This basic document remains, therefore, the point of departure for any discussion or action designed to suppress or prevent African conflicts. It is only fitting that the programme proposed by the Ambassador of Mauritius draws its references from that same report.

As you have requested, Mr. President, my delegation will focus its observations and comments on four items. I shall begin with relations with the Economic and Social Council.

Given the well-established interaction between peace-building and the socio-economic development of the African countries emerging from conflicts, the coordination of the Economic and Social Council's activities and those of the Security Council goes without saying. The same logic calls for the establishment of links between the Economic and Social Council advisory group and the Security Council ad hoc Working Group, thus giving concrete form to the integrated approach described in the Secretary-General's report on the causes of conflict. Indeed, such coordination is not an end in itself; it will be worthwhile only if it is pragmatic and oriented towards achieving results. It would have the merit of offering more visibility to the Government of a country involved in a conflict, as well as to its partners, whether they be donor countries, international financial institutions or private investors.

Within the context of the coordination sought by the Council in order to prevent the aggravation of conflict or to prevent the outbreak of new conflict, we feel that particular mention should be accorded to cooperation and coordination with the High Commissioner for Refugees and with the International Committee of the Red Cross.

Conflicts in Africa are a constant source of untold human suffering. Millions of persons have been displaced from their homes, separated from their families and forced to live in deplorable conditions. In that regard, the High Commissioner for Refugees and the International Committee of the Red Cross play a valuable and irreplaceable role in the treatment of the

humanitarian aspects of African conflicts and should therefore be able to fulfil their mandate with regard to refugees and detained persons, regardless of the final political settlement. In that respect, it is essential that the United Nations adopt concrete measures with a view to ensuring strict respect for the norms of international humanitarian law by all of the parties to conflicts. As we know, these are imperative norms that must be respected by all.

I should now like to discuss the second item, concerning confidence-building measures in the Mano River region. The Mano River region deserves all the attention that the Council can accord it in this debate. My country, which, upon the invitation of His Majesty the King, hosted on 27 February a summit of the heads of State of Guinea, Liberia and Sierra Leone, can testify to the commitment of the leaders of those countries to re-establish peace in the Mano River region. The summit in Rabat launched a quest for peace with the adoption of a set of measures to make common borders safer, to repatriate refugees and to provide assistance to displaced persons.

In the framework of the follow-up to the summit, a meeting of foreign ministers was held in Morocco on 7 and 8 April. At that meeting, confidence-building measures were drafted and adopted by the participants. They included the rapid deployment of joint border-security units; the control of the proliferation of small arms and light weapons; the establishment of an environment conducive to the repatriation of refugees; the organization of a caravan to restore confidence along the common borders, to include dignitaries from the three countries; and the official opening of borders to permit the free movement of people and goods. The implementation of those measures warrants all the support that the international community can muster with a view to restoring peace to the region.

With respect to the role of the Special Representatives of the Secretary-General, my delegation wishes to stress the following elements.

First, the role of the Special Representative of the Secretary-General, entrusted with the primary responsibility for a peacekeeping operation, is crucial to the fulfilment of the Organization's mandate with respect to a given dispute or conflict. That mandate logically begins with a guarantee of strict respect for a ceasefire by all parties. That respect is the starting point and fundamental basis of any process leading to a definitive political solution to the conflict.

Secondly, ongoing coordination between the various United Nations agencies involved in a peacekeeping operation is of significant added value and a principal asset towards the success of a given mission.

Lastly, as we know, the Secretary-General occasionally and periodically holds coordination meetings with the various Special Representatives, either in New York or in Geneva. It might be desirable for similar regular meetings to be held within an African region or subregion or even at the African continental level. Such regular meetings could encourage an exchange of experiences and information that could prove useful in improving mission performance.

I wish now to discuss cooperation with regional and subregional organizations and with States. Such cooperation, set forth in the United Nations Charter and institutionalized by General Assembly resolutions, should be extended to such subregional organizations as the Southern Africa Development Community, the Economic Community of West African States, the Intergovernmental Authority on Development and the Community of Sahel-Saharan States, which, it must be said, play an active role in reducing tensions in several African regions. Interaction between the ad hoc Working Group of the Security Council and these state groupings could only be beneficial to United Nations efforts to resolve conflicts. Similarly, States whose proximity to or relations with parties to a conflict recommend them for a role in promoting rapprochement and reconciliation would benefit by being included regularly and whenever necessary or useful in the work of the ad hoc Working Group.

Lastly, I wish to say that my delegation is pleased to note that peace-building and the implementation of preventive diplomacy, particularly in Africa, continue to be a focus of the Security Council. This debate, however, should not lead us to forget that peace in Africa remains linked to development and that the United Nations and the international community must pursue both of these objectives at the same time and, with the same determination and energy, assist Africa in its efforts towards democratic, economic and social recovery and to eradicate, in particular, poverty and AIDS.

Mr. Valdivieso (Colombia) (*spoke in Spanish*): Once again, I am pleased to see you, Sir, presiding over this important meeting, just as you did the other day on an another item of tremendous relevance to you and to all of us.

The Council's programme of work will surely be considerably enriched by this debate; by the contributions of all delegations and Council members; by the very important statements of Ambassador Šimonović, speaking on behalf of the Economic and Social Council, and Ambassador Kébé, speaking on behalf of the Organization of African Unity (OAU); and, most especially, by all the efforts of the ad hoc Working Group on Conflict Prevention and Resolution in Africa, under the guidance of Ambassador Koonjul.

Following the agreed procedure for this meeting, I wish to refer to some of the points raised today. First of all, it has been made quite clear by the vast majority of speakers that the Council devotes a very significant share of its time to addressing problems of peace and security in Africa. I should like to note the emphasis that has been placed on the quantitative aspect of our work on African issues, whereas it seems to me that the qualitative dimension of our work has yet to be defined and agreed. This leads me to conclude that today's debate and the activities of the Working Group may serve to redress the deficit in the quality of the attention dedicated to the African agenda by the Council, which stands to be improved.

Secondly, we note and have heard a number of references to the fact that the other main organs of the United Nations, each in its own field, are developing initiatives linking peace and security to development problems in Africa. The General Assembly is soon to hold a final review and appraisal of the United Nations New Agenda for the Development of Africa in the 1990s. The working group of the Economic and Social Council has also continued to function. The Economic and Social Council dedicated a segment of its annual session on coordination to the question of Africa in 1999. It later dedicated a high-level ministerial segment to Africa. The creation of this new advisory body on countries emerging from conflicts is a new contribution. Lately, the Secretariat has concentrated on giving validity and effectiveness to the regional focus in the resolution of conflicts, starting by applying this concept — attributed to Ambassador Fall — to West Africa, where he will be working.

Nevertheless — it must be frequently repeated — we feel that this broad effort will not lead to conclusions and recommendations that can be easily coordinated in the Council's work of seeking to maintain international peace and security. Often, one has the impression that the General Assembly or the Economic and Social Council or even the Secretariat belonged to an organization separate from the United Nations based on their contribution to the work of the Security Council. In other words, this lack of conceptual and operational cohesiveness in the treatment of African issues among the various principal organs of the United Nations should be resolved. Therefore, it is important, as several delegations have mentioned, that the various contacts and the meetings on Africa of the main organs and even the subsidiary organs, whether in the Security Council or the General Assembly, should be mutually reinforcing. The Working Group is very important in this respect.

I wished to refer to one of the points of the programme of work as described by Ambassador Koonjul at the start of the meeting and in the support documentation. There is general agreement on the relevance of those points. There is unanimous agreement, in particular, on the question of cooperation of the Security Council with the Organization of African Unity and with the subregional organizations. As for the functioning of groups of friends for specific conflict situations, those groups should include African and non-African countries. I listened with interest to the remarks on the prudence with which the Working Group should proceed in studying the electoral processes, precisely because of the risk that it might weaken the competencies of the General Assembly or the Secretariat in that field. In general, we believe that the United Nations should advocate the formation of a greater regional capacity for electoral monitoring, so that it can be present in the African continent, where the electoral process will ultimately be managed most, and thus strengthen democracy in the African continent.

Finally, my delegation wishes to support the recommendation expressed by Assistant Secretary-General Fall, supported by various speakers, to include the issue of the proliferation of and trade in small arms in the agenda of the ad hoc Working Group. He mentioned that it was necessary to more strictly enforce the moratoriums and regional actions to prevent the proliferation of arms. It must also be said,

on the issue of the trade in small arms, that it is indispensable that we expend greater efforts. It is well known that there are well-organized and even well-known criminal organizations that continue to function without the Council deciding to confront them in a more direct manner. Mr. Fall mentioned the importance of going to the sources of the weapons. In that context, he mentioned that the Chairman of the Working Group could meet with the weapons-manufacturing countries to request their greater contribution to the solution of this problem, which is overwhelming many countries and destroys thousands of lives in Africa and in many parts of the world. It is therefore an important issue. We will well consider that point in order to elaborate on the suggestion of Mr. Fall in the programme of work.

Recently, we have spoken of the importance of the Security Council building collective positions on the question of Africa. I wish to say that the need of building collective positions exists at the level of the overall system of the United Nations. That is why I believe that this Working Group can contribute to the creation of such collective positions in the United Nations system.

The President: The next speaker inscribed on my list is the representative of the United Republic of Tanzania. I invite him to take a seat at the Council table and to make his statement.

Mr. Mwakawago (United Republic of Tanzania): We are honoured to see you, Sir, preside over the Council's meeting. I would like to start by commending Ambassador Kishore Mahbubani of Singapore, the current President of the Council, and Ambassador Jagdish Koonjul of Mauritius, the Chairman of the Working Group, for organizing this special meeting devoted, yet again, to the situation in Africa. It is our intention to make a modest contribution to the workings of the Working Group. But before I do that, I would like to congratulate the people of East Timor for achieving statehood. The United Nations, and the Security Council in particular, deserve our commendation.

As we are meeting, my delegation would like to register our appreciation and delight at the good news emanating from The Hague with respect to the border conflict between Ethiopia and Eritrea, from Luanda, the capital of Angola, and from Freetown in Sierra Leone. The Ethiopia-Eritrea border conflict has been settled, and the two countries have accepted the arbitration of the Boundary Commission. In Angola, a general amnesty has been proclaimed to UNITA fighters and a Memorandum of Understanding has been signed between the Government and UNITA. A few days ago, the Council lifted sanctions on UNITA for 90 days. The latest good news is the peaceful outcome of the presidential and parliamentary elections in Sierra Leone. In all these cases, the peoples of those countries deserve our very hearty congratulations. But it would be remiss not to recognize the positive and active participation of the United Nations and of the Security Council, in particular.

It is against that backdrop that these deliberations are being held today. In all three cases war situations have been resolved through the use of different mechanisms. But one thing is certain and evident, and that is that the Security Council worked in close collaboration with regional and local entities. Perhaps the Working Group could go over the elements that were positive and isolate the negatives in order to expedite conflict resolution.

In the light of the above positive developments, we may wish to ask whether there is a need to revisit all resolutions pertaining to the three resolved conflicts and determine what elements are still outstanding so that they can be programmed for resolution.

In the case of the Democratic Republic of the Congo, from where the Security Council Mission has just returned, it is heartening to note that the inter-Congolese dialogue took place in Sun City, South Africa. From the reports we have seen, substantial progress was made. We expect that the Council will stay engaged until all the outstanding issues are sorted out and ownership of the process returns squarely to Congolese hands. However, at this stage it is important to commend the Congolese people on the achievements registered. Along with that, we took note with appreciation of the destruction of 1,000 firearms during the Security Council Mission's visit to Kisangani.

Trafficking in illegal small arms and light weapons is the worst scourge in African conflicts. It will be recalled that the Council has had occasion to address the issue. I need not over-emphasize here that African conflicts cannot be resolved without also addressing the perennial problem of illegal trafficking in small arms and light weapons.

Peace is central to addressing the development equation of Africa. African leaders are determined to bring positive change to the continent. The people are yearning for peace so that poverty, ignorance and disease can be confronted head on. It is, therefore, important that the Council become an active partner for change. At this juncture, I would like to underscore the postulates of the 2000 Millennium Summit with respect to the plight of Africa. We hope that the Working Group will not try to reinvent the wheel. Rather, we hope that it will analyse the various proposals and come up with workable solutions.

I need also to state here that some progress was achieved in Burundi by the end of last year. After four years of protracted negotiations, an agreement was reached and one of the recommendations was an interim power-sharing arrangement. The transitional Government was installed on 1 November last year. In 12 months there will be a changeover. Fighting, unfortunately, is still continuing, but the regional leaders are working very hard to secure a ceasefire. At the international level, it would appear that there is a wait-and-see attitude. That is not helpful.

The pledges made in Paris have not been honoured. The Transitional Government needs the aid that was promised. It is our conviction that, if assistance were given to the Transitional Government, it would greatly help cement peace by isolating the rebels for what they are. I cannot overstate the fact that conflict resolution has elements of "the carrot and the stick". It is vitally important that the two elements are carefully calibrated. Otherwise, all the efforts will come to naught.

Let me conclude my statement with a few general observations, which I hope the Working Group will address as well.

One of the unintended consequences of conflicts is the movement of peoples, either as refugees or as internally displaced persons. Tanzania has been host to refugees since long before its independence. Currently, we host over 500,000 refugees from Burundi and over 170,000 from the Democratic Republic of the Congo. It is a huge responsibility. We submit, therefore, that conflict resolution mechanisms should at all times be factored into the plight of refugees. I am aware that disarmament, demobilization, reinsertion, repatriation and resettlement are an integral part of the conflict resolution mechanism. I am, therefore, flagging the issue of refugees, so that it is does remain an afterthought.

The second issue is the question of the relationship between the Council and local actors. I raise this because of three considerations. The Council is entrusted with the overall authority for securing international peace and security. Along with that mandate is the power to impose sanctions. Given the fact that it is the neighbours of a conflict area who bear the brunt of the fallout of the conflict, it is our view that sound coordination is vital. The region is closer to the scene on a daily basis and punitive measures by neighbours have managed to cajole an obstinate Government to negotiate. Yet, in the light of past experience, the Working Group could discuss the issue and come up with recommendations as to how best to use regional mechanisms to enforce Council mandates.

Last but not least, I would like to address the issue of peacekeeping operations in Africa. There have been misgivings with regard to the handling by the Security Council of African peacekeeping operations. There is a perception out there that there has been a lot of hesitation and under-subscription. The Sierra Leone experience is instructive. There were, indeed, two peacekeeping operations: one by the United Nations under the Security Council and the other by a leading member of the Council. It is quite obvious that that model cannot be replicated elsewhere in the continent, but the Working Group could examine the implications and the ramifications of such an experiment. I have referred only to the presence of two operations in the same area with different command structures. I did not tackle the firepower at the disposal of each of the forces. That can be analysed by the Working Group.

In conclusion, I will only make brief reference to the importance of the peace dividend in any conflict resolution. The African drama has been documented extensively. Indeed, all analyses emphasize the preponderance of poverty. It is our hope that in working on blueprints for conflict resolution, the question of humanitarian assistance and overall development will be given pride of place.

This initiative is welcome. But I would like to conclude by hoping that special sessions do not replace African initiatives; at the end of the day very little is achieved on the ground. With the good will of all, I am quite sure that peace can prevail in the continent and that African development can become a reality.

The President: I call on the representative of Bahrain. I invite him to take a seat at the Council table and to make his statement.

Mr. Saleh (Bahrain) (*spoke in Arabic*): Allow me at the outset to express our thanks and gratitude to you, Sir, for organizing this public meeting on this important issue. We fully appreciate your transparent method, which includes the involvement of non-members of the Council in its deliberations and the deliberations of the ad hoc Working Group of the Security Council. It is our hope that these deliberations will be crowned with success and will contribute constructive ideas that will assist in conflict prevention and resolution in the African continent.

I also wish to express our appreciation to the Chairman of the Working Group, the Permanent Representative of Mauritius, for his comprehensive report to the Council today and his ambitious programme. We wish him every success in his endeavours.

Mr. President, allow me to speak about three important points that I believe need further deliberation. The first of these is the strengthening of coordination between the Security Council and the Economic and Social Council. In Chapter I of the United Nations Charter, entitled "Purposes and Principles", paragraph 1 of Article 1 lists the maintenance of international peace and security as one of the most important purposes of the United Nations. It proceeds stating that the United Nations should "take effective collective measures for the prevention and removal of threats" to international peace and security. Taking these collective measures, as we understand it, requires the coordination of efforts of all actors in the international community and within the United Nations organs themselves.

Chapter X of the United Nations Charter states in its Article 65 that the Economic and Social Council

> "may furnish information to the Security Council and shall assist the Security Council upon its request".

Hence, we can see that there is a clear and unequivocal legal basis for cooperation and coordination between the Security Council and the Economic and Social Council. Furthermore, the Secretary-General has emphasized this objective in his report on the prevention of armed conflicts, in which he says:

> "A successful prevention strategy depends on the cooperation of many United Nations actors, including the Secretary-General, the Security Council, the General Assembly, the Economic and Social Council, the International Court of Justice and United Nations agencies, offices, funds and programmes, as well as the Bretton Woods institutions." (*A/55/985, Executive Summary*)

In this report, the Secretary-General refers to the importance of the role of regional organizations, non-governmental organizations and organizations of civil society. Since the mandate of the Economic and Social Council includes humanitarian affairs, it is our view that there is wide scope for cooperation and coordination to realize the purposes and principles of the United Nations Charter.

Since the beginning of the 1990s, we also have witnessed increased attention paid by the Security Council to humanitarian situations and their impact on international peace and security. This is attested to by several resolutions adopted by the Security Council; some of them were adopted under Chapter VII of the United Nations Charter.

We can draw a similarity in the relations between the Security Council and the Economic and Social Council and those between development and peace. The relationship between these two terms is quite close and a lot can be said in this respect. We believe that investment in human capital contributes effectively towards avoiding armed conflict. Development cannot be achieved unless there is peace; peace is endangered if there is a problem with development. Consequently, we believe that the roles of the Economic and Social Council and the Security Council are complementary. In this respect, I would like to refer to the high-level segment of the Economic and Social Council. This year it will be taken up as a subject at the Council's substantive session. Next July it will discuss the contribution of the development of human resources in the process of development, including in the fields of health and education. Furthermore, the proposal by the Economic and Social Council to establish an ad hoc advisory group on African countries emerging from conflict, if adopted, will be a positive and effective contribution by the Economic and Social Council to the prevention of conflict on the African continent through long-term development programmes or what we call peacebuilding in the post-conflict era. It is our hope

that a specific mechanism for coordination and cooperation between this advisory group and the ad hoc Working Group of the Security Council on the prevention of conflicts in Africa will be established.

We believe in the importance of effective coordination between the two Councils in order to realize the noble objectives in the United Nations Charter. This cooperation and coordination may take different forms and could be strengthened through periodic meetings between the Presidents of the two Councils. The President of each Council could be invited to participate in the meetings of the other to discuss issues of mutual interest. There can also be strengthening through meetings between the two Councils; and we hope that will be realized very soon. In this respect, my country welcomes the initiative taken by the Security Council under the Mauritian presidency to address an invitation to the President of the Economic and Social Council to participate for the first time in a Security Council meeting dated 29 January 2002 regarding the situation in Africa. An invitation was extended for this meeting, too. We appreciate this constructive approach, because we believe that both Councils can do a lot, especially in the area of peace-building in the post-conflict era.

In view of the continent's suffering throughout the previous decades and the serious implications of its civil wars, we believe that the Security Council and the Economic and Social Council together can do more for this continent if cooperation and coordination are strengthened.

My second point concerns the role of the Special Representatives of the Secretary-General. The experiment of previous years has shown the important role played by these Special Representatives, especially in the hotbeds of armed conflict. They played a mediatory role between the parties to the conflict and have provided the Secretary-General and the Security Council with detailed information on the situation in the field. This information is very important for the decision makers. It would be appropriate if some of the Secretary-General's Special Representatives in Africa could be invited to attend meetings on this item with the Council to exchange views with them, to learn of the difficulties and obstacles facing them now or those they faced in the past and to find ways and means for alleviating and solving those problems and difficulties.

My third point refers to cooperation with the Organization of African Unity (OAU) and other subregional organizations. It is indeed important for the Working Group to continue cooperation and coordination with the OAU, which has specific visions and ideas and is close to the parties and the armed conflicts in Africa. This applies to other subregional organizations, such as the Intergovernmental Authority on Development (IGAD), which plays an active role regarding the question of Somalia. The Council and the Working Group itself can enhance this role through coordination and cooperation with these organizations and exchanges of views on these problems.

The Community of Sahel-Saharan States (CENSAD) is also playing an important role, as stated by the Permanent Representative of the Libyan Arab Jamahiriya this morning. There is a need for better coordination of efforts both among the organizations themselves and with the United Nations.

Finally, I would like to express my support for the statement by the President of the Economic and Social Council, Ambassador Šimonović, regarding the importance of considering the root causes of armed conflict, because understanding them will facilitate the task of finding appropriate solutions. It is our hope that this meeting will yield ideas that will help the Working Group to implement its ambitious programme.

Mr. Aguilar Zinser (Mexico) (*spoke in Spanish*): My delegation welcomes the fact that you, Sir, are presiding over this meeting of the Security Council as your country's Minister for Foreign Affairs. This clearly demonstrates the importance that Singapore attaches to the work of the Security Council on African issues, and to our Organization's peacekeeping activities.

The Security Council is responsible for resolving conflicts and maintaining peace and security. At the international level this task is particularly meaningful for Africa. In association with the other bodies of the United Nations and with the joint support of the international community, this implies a capacity, when conflicts loom, to engage in conflict prevention, conflict resolution and above all to erect an architecture of peace that will promote development for the peoples of Africa in spite of whatever conflicts there may be in the region.

It is of particular importance to the work of the Council that the ad hoc Working Group on Africa has

been created, because it reflects a commitment to dedicate to African affairs the attention, priority and continuity that they deserve within the Council and the United Nations. The Working Group on Africa has enabled the Council to focus and integrate its efforts on Africa. In the immediate future it must continue to be a focal point for meetings between the Security Council and African countries, regional organizations and other groups within that region.

The Security Council's responsibility for Africa is one of its greatest challenges and it strains the Council's ability to discharge its Charter mandate. The perspective from which the Council should work jointly with Africans in maintaining peace and security in the region is to consider in an integrated way peace as a continuous effort that must be pursued in a well defined manner and in strategic association with the international community as a whole and in close coordination with the other organs of the United Nations.

The starting point for this activity must be consultations with the African countries and with their regional organizations. The guidelines for Security Council action in Africa must be provided by the Africans themselves. The Security Council must be receptive and must apply criteria based on the understanding that the Africans themselves have of their situation and their possibilities. The effectiveness of the Security Council therefore depends on its ability to communicate its tasks and nourish its activities with the points of view that the Africans themselves bring, and also with the existence of strong and solid regional institutions.

It is therefore of particular importance to my country to stress the need for the Security Council to continuously promote the participation of the African organizations as being immediately and primarily responsible for the maintenance of international peace and security in that area. The Security Council must support those organizations and assist them in discharging their missions.

The Security Council, given its restricted powers and the way they are described in the Charter, cannot ignore the close linkage between economic and social development, and peace and security in Africa. Therefore, it is incumbent upon it to forge close links with the Economic and Social Council so that a genuine strategic association enables the two organs to work together, each within the scope of its responsibilities, to build lasting peace in the region.

From that perspective, and viewing the Working Group on Africa led by Ambassador Koonjul of Mauritius as the focus of Council action, my country considers that the Council must immediately target its activities regarding initiatives that can be considered by the Working Group on four immediate regional and subregional priorities.

The first is the task of enabling peace through political arrangements that guarantee the territorial integrity, sovereignty and independence of the Democratic Republic of the Congo. Any democratic transition that could result from political agreements reached through the inter-Congolese dialogue must immediately lead to the withdrawal of foreign troops from the territory of the Democratic Republic of the Congo. Success by the United Nations and the African community, in keeping with the promises and commitments set out in the Lusaka Agreement, is the foundation for peace, progress and development in the Great Lakes region. The Democratic Republic of the Congo, in view of its size and its wealth of resources, could become a tremendous engine for development in the whole Great Lakes area and an invaluable factor for stability. It could just as easily, however, remain a factor of instability and conflict. Therefore the Security Council must attach a high level of priority, as it has to the search for peace in the Democratic Republic of the Congo. That is what prompted the recent visit of members of the Security Council to the Great Lakes region.

We must work with the Africans within the framework of existing agreements. We must contribute to the success of the inter-Congolese dialogue by means of the instruments designed for that purpose.

Mexico fully trusts the capacities of the signatories of the agreements on which the inter-Congolese dialogue is based. We are fully confident in the capacity of the Congolese to quickly arrive at an inclusive arrangement on a political solution that will guarantee the integrity of the Democratic Republic of the Congo. We trust that it will also be achieved with the active participation of the Organization of African Unity and interested countries, in particular South Africa. My country greatly appreciates the efforts of South Africa in seeking peace for the Great Lakes region.

Whatever success we achieve in the Democratic Republic of the Congo will be a starting point from which to stabilize the entire region and to find a way out of the internal conflict in Burundi and full recovery of peace and security in Rwanda. It is from this perspective that we believe that the Working Group on Africa is responsible for continuing to focus the interest and the political will of the members of the Council on finding, in cooperation with the African countries and organizations, a quick solution to the very risky and volatile situation in the Democratic Republic of the Congo.

The second topic that we feel should have priority in the work of the Security Council is consolidating the achievements in the region of the Mano River Union, especially in Sierra Leone. There should be an effort to ensure that the commitments undertaken by the countries of the Mano River region become a reality and that they live within secure boundaries, in an atmosphere of mutual respect. These objectives should also be analysed very carefully and thoroughly by the Council's ad hoc Working Group on Africa.

The third issue to which my country attaches high priority in the short term is the situation in the Western Sahara. The right of the Saharan people to self-determination must be guaranteed, whether through political negotiations or through the active participation of the Security Council in the search for a definitive solution to this conflict, which is one of the oldest issues addressed by the Council. We have mandatory deadlines, and we have a situation that cannot go on any further. The ad hoc Working Group on Africa is the proper forum in which to hold consultations between the members of the Security Council and interested African countries in order to arrive at an agreement. The Security Council obviously cannot unilaterally impose a resolution to the conflict, but it can certainly further the possibility for the parties concerned to find a way out.

The fourth priority which my delegation considers a fundamental task of the Council in its current agenda is to continue working for a satisfactory and definitive demarcation of the border between Ethiopia and Eritrea in order to put an end to their conflict.

The Working Group should serve as a forum in which to analyse the effectiveness of United Nations peace missions in Africa and their ability to discharge the tasks they have been entrusted with. We should look at their resources and the commitments undertaken by the international community. The collective thinking of the Working Group on the lessons learned in the different experiences of the existing peace missions in Africa can help and make a contribution to enhancing their effectiveness. The Working Group should also examine the efficiency and the timeliness of existing sanctions and should examine the future of sanctions regimes as an instrument which could contribute to the creation of conditions of peace and security in the regions.

The Working Group has an express mandate to facilitate and promote strategic interaction among organs and bodies both in the United Nations and in regional countries to reach the Council's peace and security objectives.

I would like to conclude by saying that among the tasks that we consider essential for the Council, we cannot ignore the importance of humanitarian action undertaken by the United Nations and the international community in Africa. A fundamental element of conflicts that so threaten peace in the area relates to refugees, human rights violations, problems of intolerance — whether interracial or inter-ethnic — and the building of mechanisms for mutual confidence.

The Security Council also has at its disposal and should make maximum use of, the knowledge of international non-governmental organizations in Africa itself and outside Africa. It should rely on them for valuable information in order to make its decision-making more sound.

This working meeting shows the Security Council's interest in deepening its presence in Africa with a greater sense of responsibility and purpose, which must always and above all be done with the inclusion of the points of view of the African countries and following their initiatives.

The President: The next speaker is the representative of Zambia. I invite him to take a seat at the Council table and to make his statement.

Mr. Musambachime (Zambia): At the outset, allow me, on behalf of the current Chairman of the Organization of African Unity (OAU), President Mwanawasa of Zambia, to congratulate the delegation of Singapore on its assumption of the presidency of the Security Council for the month of May. My delegation

also wishes to thank you, Mr. President, for initiating this meeting, which will undoubtedly go a long way in helping to resolve conflicts in Africa. In the same vein, let me commend your predecessor, Ambassador Lavrov of the Russian Federation, for the able manner in which he guided the affairs of the Council during the month of April.

We also wish to pay a special tribute to Ambassador Koonjul of Mauritius for his tireless work. We are confident that, under his chairmanship, the ad hoc Working Group will enhance and supplement efforts to bring about lasting peace on the African continent. We also thank him for the statement that he made this morning on the mandate of the ad hoc Working Group.

My delegation further wishes to thank the Chairman of the Economic and Social Council and the Permanent Observer of the OAU for their important statements this morning. Special thanks go also to Assistant Secretary-General Ibrahima Fall for his contribution to the establishment of the ad hoc Working Group and for the support he has given to it. We also thank him for the thought-provoking statement that he made this morning. I should like to mention here that we welcome his appointment as Special Representative of the Secretary-General for West Africa. As he leaves to take up his new post in Dakar, we wish him well.

The decision to convene this meeting to discuss the ad hoc Working Group on Conflict Prevention and Resolution in Africa is to be highly commended. The meeting is a timely and welcome development in that it allows members and non-members of the Council to review the situation in Africa and to propose a new course of action. My delegation would like to express its appreciation to the Security Council for devoting so much time to issues concerning Africa. This debate, and the visits made by Council members to our continent to get a first-hand impression of the situation and to have the opportunity to discuss issues with our leaders and with other parties to conflicts, have highlighted the extent of the Council's interest in resolving issues and in finding solutions to conflicts in Africa.

In view of the complex nature of the conflicts in Africa, the ad hoc Working Group has a huge responsibility to find innovative ways of addressing their underlying causes in order to foster sustainable peace and security on our continent. The holding of this meeting is a step towards realizing the objectives of the ad hoc Working Group.

The Secretary-General's report on the causes of conflict and the promotion of durable peace and sustainable development in Africa (S/1998/318) was published in 1998 and was considered by the General Assembly, the Security Council and the Economic and Social Council as highlighting the causes of conflict, which include poverty; local, national and regional instability; and widespread and easy access to small arms and light weapons. The report also contains a series of both specific and broad recommendations on the issues of conflict resolution, post-conflict peace-building and the mobilization of resources for development. My delegation has total confidence in the report's recommendations.

The holding of this meeting comes at a time when a number of positive developments are taking place in Africa. We want to congratulate the people of Sierra Leone on the steps that they have taken towards peace in their country. The successful holding of elections there, in an atmosphere of peace and tranquillity during the entire exercise, demonstrated that the people of Sierra Leone were tired of war and desired peace.

We salute the people of the Democratic Republic of the Congo for the significant progress of the inter-Congolese dialogue in Sun City, South Africa, under the wise counsel of the facilitator, Sir Ketumile Masire, former President of Botswana, and President Mbeki of South Africa. The Congolese people deserve praise for their serious approach to their responsibilities and for securing agreement on 87 points, which constituted approximately 85 per cent of what was to be discussed. We hope that the remaining issues will not prove to be obstacles to moving the peace process forward. We also hope that, under the aegis of the Lusaka Agreement, which is accepted by all parties to the conflict, the agreement between the Government and the Movement for the Liberation of the Congo will be used as a framework to broaden and incorporate all other groups as they work towards a final agreement. It is important that the final agreement be owned by all groups in the Congo.

We also congratulate the people of Angola for the giant strides they have taken towards the cessation of conflict since February this year. We note with satisfaction the rapid progress of the peace process, the demobilization of former rebel soldiers and the gradual

resettlement of displaced persons. It is our hope that those developments will be permanent and that the people of Angola will not return to war. The Angolan people need peace; we hope that it is now within their grasp. The international community should continue to give them support as they strive towards the attainment of peace in their country.

My delegation would also like to congratulate Eritrea and Ethiopia on accepting the report of the Eritrea-Ethiopia Boundary Commission without reservation. That development is a demonstration of two neighbouring countries resolving the conflict between them in a peaceful and friendly manner.

We wish to note that some progress has also been registered in Burundi. A transitional Government is in place, and we hope that the international community will continue to give support to the peace process in that country.

At this juncture, we would like to commend the leaders of Africa for producing an economic initiative, the New Partnership for Africa's Development (NEPAD). It is a blueprint for the development of Africa, and it stresses such aspects as the importance of the prevention, management and resolution of conflicts; peace enforcement, peacekeeping and peacemaking; and post-conflict reconciliation, rehabilitation and reconstruction. More important, it focuses on the utilization of Africa's own resources for development with the support of partners.

The developments taking place in Madagascar, the Republic of the Congo, Somalia and Liberia are, however, less comforting. The situations in those countries demand concerted action by all concerned — including the international community — to restore peace and to avoid further loss of life and suffering among the people. We commend the efforts of the Security Council, the OAU, the regional groups and the various African leaders to bring peace to these sister countries. We pray and hope that they will bear fruit soon.

In conclusion, I wish to take this opportunity to pledge the full support and commitment of my delegation to the activities of the ad hoc Working Group. Its objectives to find solutions to the problems of Africa have our support. It is my hope that, together, we can make a difference and find workable solutions for Africa.

The President: The next speaker inscribed on my list is the representative of Côte d'Ivoire. I invite him to take a seat at the Council table and to make his statement.

Mr. Djangone-Bi (Côte d'Ivoire) (*spoke in French*): My delegation welcomes you, Sir, and is pleased to see you presiding over this important meeting of interactive dialogue, so opportunely convened by the Security Council, on the problem of preventing and resolving the conflicts undermining the African continent and jeopardizing the future well-being of its peoples.

We are indeed very happy and satisfied with this new method of work of the Security Council, which not only has given pride of place to Africa in its schedule, but has also decided to listen to the Africans at regular intervals. It is very true that a man cannot be made happy against his will.

We also wish to thank and congratulate Ambassador Koonjul, the Permanent Representative of Mauritius and Chairman of the ad hoc Working Group on Conflict Prevention and Resolution in Africa, for the great work he has done to date. My delegation urges him to continue on his course with the courage, resolve and competence with which we are so familiar.

Allow me to illustrate my points by using medical terms that, in my view, are well suited to the circumstances. The issue at hand is indeed one of disease and cure.

During the exchange of views that took place on 29 January between the Security Council and African representatives, the latter emphasized the need for prevention rather than for cure, because once a disease has taken hold, recovery may be difficult, lengthy and sometimes uncertain, leaving a trail of death and suffering in its wake. The Africans therefore recognize the importance of preventive diplomacy, although the need to resolve pressing issues requires the implementation of remedial diplomacy as well.

During the debate of 29 January, the main causes of conflict in Africa were identified, inter alia, along the following lines: the absence of democracy, good governance and the rule of law indispensable to democracy; poverty, illiteracy and disease, especially HIV/AIDS; and the proliferation and illicit trafficking of small arms. In order to treat a disease, one must first and above all begin to diagnose it.

Some time ago, Secretary-General Kofi Annan essentially said that if the resolutions, recommendations and decisions of the United Nations could solve problems in and of themselves, Africa would have overcome its difficulties a long time ago. In brief, as the Latins said: "Facta non verba". On the basis of the Secretary-General's statement, on 29 January the Africans spoke with one voice to say that, with respect to Africa's development, including conflict prevention and resolution, it is high time for concrete deeds based on the need for results.

Backing up his words with action, the Secretary-General recently opened a regional United Nations Office for West Africa and named Mr. Ibrahima Fall as his Special Representative. My delegation is grateful to him for that and takes this opportunity warmly to congratulate Mr. Fall, whose hardest work, it must be said, has only just begun. In any case, he may be assured of the full cooperation of Côte d'Ivoire.

On another matter, my delegation welcomes the very recent entry into force of the International Criminal Court, which we view as the main instrument not only for preventing, but also for resolving conflicts throughout the world and, most particularly, in Africa. The International Criminal Court completes the array of legal instruments aimed at establishing the rule of law worldwide.

In that context, my delegation believes that the conclusions proposed by Ambassador Koonjul at the first meeting of the Working Group on 22 March with Mr. Fall effectively reflect the letter and spirit of the meeting between the African Group and the Security Council on 29 January. My delegation particularly welcomes the third, sixth, seventh and tenth points of the informal report, in which the Working Group emphasizes the need for a pragmatic approach to guide its actions and envisages the possibility of involving the Bretton Woods institutions in its activities.

In this regard, my delegation believes that, unless we are careful, instead of contributing to an effective struggle against poverty, the activities of the donors — including the European Union and the G-8 — could actually exacerbate poverty. Indeed, the money loaned would be used only by a small group of elites, whereas the debt burden would be borne by taxpayers. It would be desirable for any new approach to involve the donors in the entire process of economic development, including the creation of a socio-political environment conducive to the measured repayment of loans, follow-up to the use of funds and, ultimately, the settlement of the debt.

To us, far from representing any kind of interference in the domestic affairs of States, an approach involving donors, even in electoral processes, could be an impetus to good governance. In any case, such an approach involves support for peoples' choices and not imposition. Moreover, the Working Group envisages working in synergy with regional and subregional organizations and involving itself in the implementation of the New Partnership for Africa's Development.

My delegation has no significant comments to make on the basis of its analysis of the Working Group's programme of work. Indeed, as we have said, conflicts are rooted in poverty, illiteracy, intolerance and fear of the other. Furthermore, one of the main sources of misunderstanding in Africa is very often the endless contestation of elections, rightly or wrongly, by suspicious protagonists. In such circumstances, my delegation would like to see special attention given to electoral processes in Africa. In order to ensure the stability of the continent, the Security Council should help to systematize, universalize and strengthen genuinely independent electoral commissions in Africa.

It is well known that the accumulation, proliferation and illicit trafficking of small arms are major destabilizing factors that, inter alia, exacerbate conflicts and legitimize the rule of the strongest and best armed. My delegation believes that, along with the First Committee of the General Assembly and the Department of Peacekeeping Operations, the ad hoc Working Group on Conflict Prevention and Resolution in Africa should devote particular attention to the problem of the proliferation and illicit trafficking of weapons in Africa. An arms moratorium should be respected not only on the ground but also at the source.

Finally, it has been generally said that, to a significant extent, African conflicts are the result of the nature of the relations between the world's great Powers. Thus, after having witnessed with concern the annulment of the Anti-Ballistic Missile Treaty of 1972, the Côte d'Ivoire welcomes the recent agreement on the limitation of strategic nuclear weapons between the United States of America and the Russian Federation. We encourage the two parties to pursue a dialogue in

order to favour a future world free of the danger of nuclear weapons.

These are, in a few words, the reflections that the delegation of Côte d'Ivoire wished to share on the subject of the prevention and resolution of conflicts in Africa.

Mr. Zhang Yishan (China) (*spoke in Chinese*): Due to the lateness of the hour, I will be very brief in my statement. We welcome your presence, Sir, and your chairing our meeting today. Your presence fully testifies to the fact that you, your country and other members of the Council, including China, attach great importance to the question of Africa. I would like to thank the Assistant Secretary-General, Mr. Fall, Ambassador Koonjul, Ambassador Kolby, Ambassador Šimonović and all previous speakers for their statements.

First, I would like to congratulate Ambassador Koonjul. Thanks to his outstanding leadership, the work of the ad hoc Working Group is gradually unfolding. He has come up with the future programme of work. Our meeting today is an important one. Listening to the views of the wider membership, especially the African countries, will greatly help the Working Group in the discharge of its mandate. We hope and demand that the Working Group, following this meeting, seriously consider the various recommendations and incorporate them into its future work.

The challenge of resolving African conflicts is, needless to say, daunting and complicated. It calls for the joint efforts of the international community, including the Security Council. A case in point is Sierra Leone, which has made remarkable progress in the peace process. We should draw lessons from the experiences gained in that country. We also believe that the international community should continue to help Sierra Leone and other countries in their post-conflict economic reconstruction and in the reintegration of former combatants into society in order to consolidate the peace that has been achieved.

Resolving the African conflicts remains an arduous task. We believe the key to better solving this issue lies in the proper handling of the following aspects. First, we should reaffirm that the international community attaches the highest priority to the question of Africa. It should ensure that, in terms of political will and resources, Africa should be awarded top priority on our agenda.

Secondly, any attempts to end conflicts in Africa should address both the symptoms and the root causes. While trying to solve conflicts in Africa, we should pay more attention to tackling the root causes by taking effective measures to help African countries to eliminate poverty and to develop their economies.

Thirdly, the various efforts of the international community should be combined to form a driving force. In this respect, we should fully take into account the views of the parties to the conflict, as well as those of neighbouring States.

Fourthly, parties to the conflict should also demonstrate their political will by responding and cooperating with international efforts. Only in this way can international organizations, including the United Nations, play a better role.

In the last century, we saw the African continent besieged by turmoil, conflicts, poverty and famine. It is also the continent with the largest number of least developed countries. That situation cannot continue in the new century. Building a peaceful, stable and prosperous Africa is a task to be shouldered by not only Africa. It is a common task for the international community. China stands ready to continue offering its support to the Working Group, the Security Council, the Economic and Social Council, the Organization of African Unity and the subregional organizations in their work. At the same time, we are also willing to make our own contribution to the earliest possible achievement of peace and development in the African continent.

Before I conclude, I would like to mention Assistant Secretary-General Fall. I had the honour of working with him for an extended period of time when I was in Geneva. I am fully acquainted with his skills and dedication. Before he assumes his new post of head of the United Nations Office for West Africa, I would like to wish him all the best and great success in his future endeavour. I hope that he will be able to make great contributions to the African countries.

The President: The next speaker inscribed on my list is the representative of Malawi. I invite him to take a seat at the Council table and to make his statement.

Mr. Lamba (Malawi): My delegation wishes to commend the delegation of Singapore for its sustained

commitment to issues confronting Africa, which is demonstrated by the convening of this very important meeting during its presidency of the Council. I would also like to commend the Security Council for offering us yet another opportunity for an interactive debate on Africa, this time specifically related to the Security Council's ad hoc Working Group on Africa. The creation of the Group is yet another important endeavour of the Council in its progression towards increased openness and active engagement in Africa. Although the establishment of the ad hoc Working Group represents a collective effort, permit me to pay special tribute to Ambassador Koonjul of Mauritius for his singular contribution to the idea that led to its formation. My delegation congratulates him on his lucid and comprehensive presentation of the programme of work of the ad hoc Working Group and its objectives.

Since the establishment of the Working Group on 27 February 2002, my delegation has viewed it as a potentially important medium for interaction and the exchange of useful ideas between the Security Council and delegations on the issue of conflict prevention and resolution in Africa. The Working Group has come at an opportune time because, although the turbulence in Africa may be showing signs of abating, as is now the case in Angola, Sierra Leone, Ethiopia and Eritrea and, to a certain extent, in the Democratic Republic of Congo, any temptation to believe that the end of the hard political road for Africa is now in sight would be rather premature and dangerous because potential hot spots remain in several areas of the continent. The ad hoc Working Group will therefore have the enormous task of evaluating political crises in Africa to determine the extent of possible intervention by the Security Council before the eruption of an armed conflict.

A number of areas indeed exist for useful liaison by the Working Group's with other bodies of the United Nations. In this regard, my delegation supports the Group's outlined approaches to its work, especially its planned operational relationship and cooperation with the Economic and Social Council and with the Organization of African Unity (OAU) aimed at dovetailing their work. The involvement of the Economic and Social Council in the rehabilitation of societies emerging from war should certainly elicit increased interest in the work of the Security Council through the ad hoc Working Group.

For the Working Group to remain in touch with Africa, its interaction with the Organization of African Unity and subregional organizations such as the Southern African Development Community, the Economic Community of West African States, the Intergovernmental Authority on Development and others is imperative. Those organizations can provide benefit to the Working Group with their hands-on experience and their knowledge of ongoing conflicts in Africa.

The OAU and the United Nations have all along operated in cooperation within the legal framework of the United Nations Charter, strengthened by resolutions of the General Assembly. The functional interface between the two organizations remains a desirable meeting point of ideas related to conflict prevention and resolution in Africa. A new era of field missions of the Security Council and the OAU would mark a welcome and more practical approach to Africa's problems.

Besides supporting the suggested close cooperation among the Group, the Permanent Observer OAU/African Union (AU) to the United Nations and subregional organizations, my delegation also fully endorses the idea of occasionally inviting representatives from academia and the community of non-governmental organizations to interact with the Working Group. Ideas flowing from those sources can only be rejuvenating and enriching, ultimately leading to useful redefinition of some of the strategies of the Security Council.

The suggestion that the Working Group could play a role in the implementation of the New Partnership for Africa's Development (NEPAD) is by no means far-fetched. The vast nature of NEPAD's structure and objectives would assure the Group a useful place in the operation of this gigantic African initiative for economic development. NEPAD was conceived as and is being launched as an OAU/AU brainchild. Obviously, many elements of NEPAD will neatly relate to the aspirations and ideals of the United Nations and the Security Council, especially in the political aspects of democracy and good governance. Those features, which are at the core of NEPAD's thrust, will no doubt be of interest to the Security Council. NEPAD therefore provides not only an instrument, but also a yardstick of Africa's renaissance.

Talking of synergy, it will be necessary to avoid duplication between the Group's mandated work and that of the ad hoc Advisory Group on African Countries Emerging from Conflict of the Economic and Social Council; a carefully planned interface of the efforts of the two groups will achieve important and productive collaboration in tackling conflict situations, from prevention to post-war activities and confidence-building.

The ad hoc Working Group's proposed programme of work represents a fairly comprehensive challenge and the Group will need support from various United Nations organs for its implementation, especially where funding is crucial to the execution of the proposed functions. My delegation feels strongly that assessing conflict situations in Africa without field visits for on-the-spot evaluations cannot yield a truly realistic picture that will facilitate the formulation of realistic strategies. The promotion of confidence-building in the countries of the Mano River Union and the enhancement of the role of the Special Representatives of the Secretary-General will always require financial support.

At this point allow me to congratulate the Security Council on its recent field mission to the Great Lakes region, during which it visited several conflict spots in the area for a realistic assessment of the situation. In my delegation's view, the expenditure on that mission was well worth it as it went towards a noble cause.

That kind of expenditure will also apply to United Nations involvement in election observation from the preparatory stages to the conclusion of the process. The terms of reference of such involvement will, of course, require careful formulation to avert possible backlash in the host county. This important aspect in the pursuit of election transparency and accountability will strengthen the ability of the United Nations to make a proper evaluation of a country's election results. The involvement of the Commonwealth or the European Union in such situations has proved useful in the appraisal of the performance of the democratization process in countries where those organizations have played an observer role.

In conclusion, my delegation would like to reiterate its congratulations to the Security Council on its innovation in the form of the ad hoc Working Group as a practical demonstration of its commitment to meaningful, progressive openness and transparency in the work of this crucial organ at the United Nations. These initiatives deserve encouragement from all of us as they characterize a new era. Malawi's request is that the Group become a permanent feature of the Council. But for the Working Group to become sufficiently productive and useful, delegations will have to play the important role of engaging it in frequent dialogue about conflicts in Africa. My delegation commits itself to staying fully engaged with the ad hoc Working Group in order for its formation to be worthwhile.

The President: the next speaker is the representative of Mali. I invite him to take a seat at the Council table and to make his statement.

Mr. Ouane (Mali) (*spoke in French*): The delegation of Mali is gratified to see the Council being guided by you, Mr. Minister, as it considers the situation in Africa. My delegation highly appreciates the many initiatives of the delegation of Singapore, under the leadership of Ambassador Mahbubani, to rationalize the work of the Security Council and bring it into line with its prime responsibility: the maintenance of international peace and security.

Today's debate is part of that dynamic. It is my pleasure to thank Ambassador Jagdish Koonjul, Chairman of the ad hoc Working Group on Conflict Prevention and Resolution in Africa, for having reported on the work of the Group with his usual thoroughness.

Speaking at this point in the debate, I would like to concentrate on two points which, in the opinion of my delegation, deserve particular attention.

First, I would like to emphasize that for the delegation of Mali conflict prevention and resolution in Africa require a comprehensive, integrated approach that takes into account the complexity of the underlying causes of conflicts in Africa and their devastating consequences. In that connection, my delegation welcomes the Secretary-General's analysis in his report of 7 June 2001 on the prevention of armed conflict (S/2001/574), as well as the adoption of resolution 1366 (2001) of 30 August 2001 and the presidential statement of 31 January 2002 (S/PRST/2002/2).

In that connection, we believe that the ad hoc Working Group on Conflict Prevention and Resolution could derive benefit from the capacities of the entire

United Nations system in devising and carrying out studies on remedying the underlying causes of conflict. That is why my delegation advocates strengthening the relationship between the Security Council and the Economic and Social Council. We say this because, despite their distinct roles, the two bodies are complementary when it comes to action in the areas of peace, security and economic and social development. Furthermore, it is important to give concrete form to the Secretary-General's intention periodically to report to the Council on regional and subregional threats to international peace and security, in particular border problems, illicit trafficking in small arms, the illegal exploitation of natural resources, refugee issues, mercenaries, child soldiers, paramilitary forces and the consequences of the interaction of these factors with security.

The second point that I would like to emphasize relates to the need to strengthen cooperation between the United Nations and regional and subregional organizations, non-governmental organizations, civil society and business circles. In that connection, we should recall that the Organization of African Unity (OAU), as well as subregional organizations such as the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) and the Southern African Development Community (SADC), have recently been endowed with institutional capacity for early warning activities and conflict prevention, in particular through their own mechanisms for conflict prevention, management and resolution. It is indispensable that we support those mechanisms, and the ad hoc Group could usefully work in this domain.

This morning, Ambassador Kébé and Mr. Fall presented some ideas on this matter, which my delegation fully supports. I would like to recall that during our term on the Security Council, Mali engaged in this exercise with some success. The relations between ECOWAS and the Council have been developing since then in a genuine spirit of partnership which should be further reinforced and expanded. The forthcoming inauguration of a United Nations Office in West Africa is also part of this movement, and Mali will contribute all the required support.

In conclusion, I would like to associate the Malian delegation with the well-deserved tribute that has been paid throughout the meeting to my mentor and friend, Mr. Ibrahima Fall, who is about to take up his duties as Assistant Secretary-General, Special Representative of the Secretary-General and head of the United Nations Office in West Africa. Our best wishes for success go with him, and we hope he will make a real success story of the United Nations Office in West Africa. He owes no less to our subregion, to the United Nations and to himself.

Mr. Kolby (Norway): First of all, Mr. President, I would like to commend your delegation and yourself for the initiative to have this important debate on the Working Group on Africa. Your presence here throughout the day is certainly a testimony to your own commitment. I would also like to commend my friend Ambassador Koonjul for his initiative in establishing and chairing the Working Group. The Working Group has had a number of meetings. I think the idea of listening at this meeting to non-members of the Council, particularly our African friends, is highly appropriate. I think we have had a very rich discussion.

The hour is late, and I shall not make very specific points. A number of very interesting proposals have been put forward, and it will now be up to the Working Group to act on them. I would just like to highlight a few approaches that Norway thinks are important.

We strongly agree with the many speakers who urged closer consultation, interaction and cooperation both within the Security Council and with the Organization of African Unity (OAU) and subregional organizations. In what concrete form should this take place? That is something I think we need to think about. But I think it should be clear to all of us that we need to pursue this avenue.

The second approach I would like to highlight is the need for closer interaction between the Security Council and the Economic and Social Council. I feel that for conflicts in Africa we need a very broad approach. As Ambassador Kumalo stated this morning, these conflicts cannot be resolved by only using the tool of peace and security. We need to add other components. We need to deal with the root causes if we are to achieve durable peace.

The third approach I would like to mention is that we need to work for regional solutions. This was highlighted by several speakers from West African countries, and I think it is appropriate for other parts of Africa also.

In conclusion, I have one specific point. The representative of Mali and many other speakers made specific reference to the role of small arms. There is no doubt that small arms are fuelling these conflicts, so we really need to find a way to come to grips with that problem.

The President: The next speaker is the representative of Mozambique. I invite him to take a seat at the Council table and to make his statement.

Mr. Dos Santos (Mozambique): We congratulate you, Sir, and your country, Singapore, on your assumption of the presidency of the Security Council for the month of May in such a committed manner. Your presence and the dedicated work of your Permanent Representative, Ambassador Kishore Mahbubani, and his able team merit our recognition and appreciation. Allow me, on behalf of the Government of the Republic of Mozambique, to warmly welcome your initiative to hold this public and interactive debate on the prevention and resolution of conflicts in Africa.

I wish to make a few general remarks on the issue before the Council today and then to address some of the specific issues you, Sir, have asked us to discuss. When the Security Council met on 29 and 30 January 2002, it had an extensive and fruitful debate on the situation in Africa that was blessed by the presence of a number of ministers and the Secretary-General of the Organization of African Unity (OAU). As a result of that meeting, the President of the Security Council issued a statement (S/2002/2) on behalf of the Council in which he summed up the debate and enunciated a set of recommendations on future United Nations work to address the situation in Africa. To monitor the implementation of those recommendations the setting up of an ad hoc Working Group on Conflict Prevention and Resolution in Africa was proposed. Today's meeting is therefore timely and important in terms of assessing the work done by the Working Group so far.

At this juncture, allow me to sincerely thank Ambassador Jagdish Koonjul, Chairman of the ad hoc Working Group, for the comprehensive briefing he presented today on the work carried out so far. We fully commend his remarkable leadership of the Group and pledge our full support to his endeavours.

As we have indicated in previous statements in the Security Council and elsewhere, our analysis of conflicts in Africa must be comprehensive, pragmatic and result-oriented; it should encompass a clear understanding of their root causes, the actors involved and the issues at stake.

Success in the prevention and resolution of conflicts in Africa can be achieved only through a proactive approach based primarily on prevention — a strategy that is effective, forward-looking and less costly.

Prevention requires addressing the root causes of conflict, which in Africa are synonymous with the pressing needs and concerns of the people, which include poverty, underdevelopment, poor governance, endemic diseases, exclusion, State legitimacy, ethnic divisions and the proliferation of arms. With regard to arms, I would like here to support the statement made by the Assistant Secretary-General, Ibrahima Fall, and his proposals. I would like to add that we need to implement the United Nations Programme of Action to Prevent, Combat and Eradicate the Illicit Trade in Small Arms and Light Weapons in All Its Aspects, which we all adopted in July last year, and which the Council welcomed.

Prevention entails a strong nexus between peace and development. The Secretary-General's report on the causes of conflict and promotion of durable peace and sustainable development in Africa (S/1998/318) rightly highlights that nexus and advances a comprehensive and integrated approach to conflict prevention, poverty eradication and development. We are hopeful that this approach will help to meet the special needs of many African countries, and it is in that connection that we see closer and enhanced coordination among the Security Council, the Economic and Social Council and other United Nations bodies and agencies.

The United Nations must also increase its support to Africa's own peace and development initiatives. African countries have continued their efforts to build African capacity for the prevention, management and resolution of conflicts and for development.

African countries, individually or through their regional and subregional organizations such as the Organization of African Unity (OAU), the Southern African Development Community (SADC) and Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS), are becoming more active and important players in these endeavours, as has been already suggested this morning and this afternoon. The creation

of the OAU Mechanism for Conflict Prevention, Management and Resolution bears testimony to the continent's determination to settle conflicts in Africa.

At the subregional level, the Heads of State or Government of the Southern African Development Community, at their ordinary summit in August 2001, in Blantyre, Malawi, signed a protocol for the operationalizing the SADC Organ on Politics, Defence and Security Cooperation, and, more recently, established an inter-State politics and diplomacy committee to enhance the effectiveness of the Organ.

All these initiatives attest to the strong commitment of Africans to solving their problems and to the reversal of the appalling situation of conflicts in Africa. These confidence-building measures need to be nurtured with the support of the international community to ensure their success.

Failure of preventive measures brings us to conflict resolution and management. For the success of conflict resolution and management, we need to review the mandates of peacekeeping operations and the conventional approaches to them. Due to their multidimensional nature, current conflicts require a comprehensive approach and the involvement of all stakeholders at the national, regional and international levels.

Allow me now to briefly touch on some of the specific issues of concern to our delegation. First, we are happy to see that the Economic and Social Council has also taken an important decision expressing a commitment to support Africa by establishing an ad hoc Working Group on African Countries Emerging from Conflicts. We wish to see greater collaboration and coordination of efforts among the Security Council, the Economic and Social Council and other United Nations bodies and agencies in their work on Africa, and we welcome the presence of the President of the Economic and Social Council at this meeting.

Secondly, we believe that success in conflict resolution is closely linked to the level of understanding of the conflict itself. Those involved in the mediation of conflicts should possess a profound knowledge of the nature and dynamics of the conflict, which can allow them to exercise the best judgement, undertake effective action and provide critical assurances to all parties to the conflict that they are also parties to the solution. We therefore believe that those tasked with mediation, including the Special Representatives of the Secretary-General, should possess all those attributes if they are to enjoy the much needed trust of all parties, and to work with the highest level of impartiality and commitment. In that regard, we congratulate His Excellency Mr. Ibrahima Fall on his appointment as head of the United Nations Office in West Africa. He is the kind of representative that we are talking about.

Thirdly, we also find the establishment of groups of friends for specific conflict situations very useful. We are of the view that these groups can be fundamental in the solution of conflicts by providing an excellent forum for debating the dynamics of the conflict itself as well as for advancing peace initiatives. Such groups should be more inclusive and representative.

Fourthly, we further believe that every initiative for conflict prevention and resolution can only benefit from the involvement of civil society, including non-governmental organizations, universities and academia: actors that can bring added value to the process through their deep knowledge of the relevant conflicts, as well as their often easy access to the parties involved.

Fifthly, we are concerned that our continent continues to register conflicts related to the exercise of democracy as candidates and their supporters often call into question election results perceived to be unjust and unfair, as was referred to earlier on in this meeting. This situation is a clear demonstration of the need for support for good governance and democratic institutions in African countries. We thus find it critical to increase international assistance in the fields of governance and the strengthening of democratic institutions, including those related to electoral processes. It is clear that elections by themselves, however successful, are not sufficient to ensure stability and progress.

Finally, the prevention and resolution of conflicts and movement towards peace, stability and development in Africa can be crowned with success only with the active involvement of the Africans themselves. In Africa there is already an institutional capacity, both at the continental and the regional levels, for the prevention and resolution of conflicts.

If these issues are taken up seriously by the ad hoc Working Group and by the Council, and if the

conclusions are followed up, then we believe that we have a greater chance to succeed.

A lot has been said about the New Partnership for Africa's Development (NEPAD). I will not develop additional ideas on this, except to mention the importance that it has for Africa and for the international community.

We encourage the United Nations to foster its cooperation and collaboration with continental and subregional institutions in the search for durable solutions to the problems affecting our continent. The level of human, material and financial resources committed to assisting Africa will remain an essential barometer in measuring the level of political will and commitment to the continent.

We are fully aware of the efforts of the United Nations, the Security Council and the Secretary-General to promote peace, security and development in our continent. We commend those efforts, and we wish to express our gratitude and to stress once again our strong determination to work together for the noble cause of bringing about peace and development in Africa.

The President: The next speaker is the representative of Somalia. I invite him to take a seat at the Council table and to make his statement.

Mr. Hashi (Somalia): Mr. President, let me join my colleagues in expressing my profound thanks to you for chairing this meeting of the Security Council. This is indicative of your personal commitment and that of your government to African issues. Let me also express our appreciation to Ambassador Mahbubani for his stewardship of this Council for this month. My highest regard is also extended to Ambassador Koonjul for sowing the idea of a Security Council ad hoc Working Group on Conflict Prevention and Resolution in Africa. I also take this opportunity to thank Ibrahima Fall and Ambassadors Kébé and Šimonović for their very enlightening contributions.

Today's meeting is timely because it is taking place on the eve of the anniversary of the founding of the Organization of African Unity (OAU) and of its coming transition to the African Union. More particularly, and in view of the fact that conflicts continue to be a major obstacle to Africa's economic and social development, for us, who have come from countries where conflicts continue to prevail, this meeting has a singular significance.

It is our hope that the ad hoc Working Group on Conflict Prevention and Resolution will be an important engine for the search for peace and stability in Africa's areas of conflict. In this regard, we will welcome the establishment of the Economic and Social Council's ad hoc Advisory Group on African Countries Emerging from Conflict. That new vehicle will no doubt enable African countries emerging from conflict to embark on the necessary road of recovery and reconstruction.

We believe that, while the mandate of the ad hoc Working Group is comprehensive enough to cover many areas, it should also cover the broader spectrum of conflict management, including enhancing early warning systems, timely sharing of information gathered at the early warning stages, peacemaking, peace-building and post-conflict peace-building and the prevention of recurrence and relapse into conflict. That holistic approach would enable the ad hoc Working Group to engage more proactively in the quest for conflict management in Africa.

Let me say at this juncture that subregional organizations have been successful in conflict resolution and management. I have a number of them in mind. For example, the Community of Sahel-Saharan States has taken steps to resolve conflicts and crises in the Central African Republic and in Chad and continues to search for a resolution to conflicts in Sudan and in Somalia.

Likewise, the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) has been successful in that regard. The success in ending the conflict in Sierra Leone should be lauded. The experience gained will be invaluable to the ad hoc Working Group; it is essential to tap into these positive experiences with a view to exploring whether they can be useful models to be emulated in future conflicts. For that purpose, we submit that the ad hoc Working Group from time to time should invite leaders of these subregional organizations and other eminent personalities to share their experiences with the ad hoc Working Group.

In our view, it is equally important that the ad hoc Working Group should continuously monitor other initiatives aimed at national reconciliation that may have stalled or faltered; this is in order to examine the reasons for such lack of success with a view to

preventing the recurrence of stalled or faltered attempts in future conflict management in Africa. In that regard, I have in mind the Somalia peace process mandated by the Intergovernmental Authority on Development (IGAD), which my Government fully supports. The obstacles to that process need to be removed, and the ad hoc Working Group could use its good offices to give an urgently needed boost to the process.

As members are aware, conflicts result in massive destruction of life and property. Large groups of people are dislocated. Some become displaced, while others seek refuge in safer havens. The ad hoc Working Group needs to see first hand the plight of people in conflict, particularly the most vulnerable in society: the elderly, women and children. It may therefore be useful for the ad hoc Working Group to undertake field visits to areas of conflict where circumstances permit.

In the work programme of the ad hoc Working Group, only some areas of conflict are mentioned. We understand that this is not to the exclusion of other areas in conflict. While all conflicts demand due attention, the ad hoc Working Group has to set priorities within priorities. The conflict in Somalia is a case in point. The ad hoc Working Group should give a special focus to forgotten conflicts in Africa.

In order to move the national reconciliation process forward, Somalia needs the unqualified attention of the ad hoc Working Group and of the international community at large. While we appreciate all of the efforts that have been undertaken, Somalia is reaching out to the international community to ask it to re-engage more vocally and energetically. For our part, we are willing to cooperate with the ad hoc Working Group in any manner that can accelerate peace throughout Africa.

The President: The next speaker is the representative of Rwanda. I invite him to take a seat at the Council table and to make his statement.

Mr. Gasana (Rwanda) (*spoke in French*): On the occasion of this open meeting of the Security Council, I would like, on behalf of my Government, to thank the Minister for Foreign Affairs of Singapore and his Permanent Representative to the United Nations for having taken this auspicious initiative of organizing a Security Council debate on Africa. We congratulate all speakers for their relevant statements, which have contributed a great deal to our understanding.

Rwanda has just commemorated the eighth anniversary of the genocide that it suffered in 1994, which caused incalculable human and material losses. My country would like to offer our experience to the international community to make the world aware of the danger inherent in all philosophies of hatred and exclusion and to ensure that the principle of "never again" declared after the Second World War will be realized as a universal principle for all the peoples of the world through the philosophy of collective security.

Since we are discussing Africa today, I should like pay tribute to all freedom fighters — to all those heroes who died as pioneers in the fight for the freedom and dignity of their peoples. Africa not only lost its sons and daughters, but also suffered monstrous humiliation and immense material damage as a result of the systematic plunder of its natural resources without compensation. Africa, therefore, should not have to bear and suffer alone the consequences of history and of the passing of the colonial era.

Since we are having a substantive debate on Africa, we might ask ourselves the question: which Africa are we discussing? There are various Africas, which constitute facets of the physical Africa depicted on maps or of the physical Africa that we fly over in aeroplanes. When we recall the way in which Africa was carved up, we can discuss the reality of the multitude of Africas: the Africa of slavery, the Africa of colonialism and of neocolonialism, the so-called black Africa and white Africa, the Africa of apartheid, the Africa of tribes and of ethnicities, the Africa of hatred and of exclusion, the "Bantu" Africa, the mythic Africa, the Africa of soldiers and of coups d'etat, the Africa of militias and mutinies, the Africa of nationalities and of unbridled nationalism, the Africa of demons and of evil spirits, the Africa of the illiterate and the functionally illiterate, the Africa of the poor, of misery and of the miserable, the Africa of diamonds and of black and yellow gold — it is all there. But there is also the Africa of Nkrumah, the Africa of Lumumba, the Africa of Benbella, the Africa of Nasser, the Africa of Um Nyobe of Cameroon, the Africa of Sékou Touré and the Africa of Mandela. Fortunately, that Africa too has existed, and it exists today in our awareness.

The Africa that we are discussing today is ravaged by ignorance, dire poverty, bad governance, military coups d'etat, manipulations, struggles and Western and other foreign influences. What can we do

to pull it back out of the dark pit of slavery and colonialism into which it sank? How can we say today that the debate on slavery and colonialism in Africa is no longer relevant when their disastrous consequences still exist in Africa — when the damage done then still afflicts it today? All the harm caused on the African continent by slavery and colonialism must be told.

The conflicts that ravage Africa have deep causes related mostly to colonialism and its ravages and also to the neocolonialism that followed the period of so-called political independence of African countries of the 1960s. Since then, each African country that has attempted to organize and to experience true political independence has been blocked by neocolonialists and their allies, either directly or indirectly through the intermediary of certain international bodies. What is to be done when neocolonialism remains invisible, wearing kid gloves, and when sometimes the glove is the United Nations, which blocks Africa and prevents it from experiencing a true rebirth, over and above all slogans?

There was a genocide in Africa for the first time in our continent's history, and unfortunately that genocide occurred in Rwanda. The planners and authors of that genocide fled to the Democratic Republic of the Congo in July 1994, under the cover of the operation involving the so-called Turquoise Zone. There, they continued to launch attacks on Rwanda and to massacre innocent people. The Government of Rwanda shouldered its responsibility and fought them right into their Congolese sanctuaries. But had it not been for the military, political, material and financial support of the Democratic Republic of the Congo and its allies for these genocidal forces, the Rwandan army would long ago have been able to find a solution to the problem.

What are the underlying causes of the Great Lakes conflict? Who is pulling the strings? Why does the conflict persist? Who is behind the curtains? Who is at the backstage? Why does the spirit of genocide — of exterminating "the other" — spread through the whole Great Lakes region before our very eyes, as we all stand by helplessly?

With regard to the genocide in Rwanda, at the request of the Security Council, the independent inquiry led by former Prime Minister Carlsson of Sweden submitted a report to the Council. That report, having assigned responsibilities for the African-Rwandese tragedy, recommended the establishment of a special post-genocide economic and social assistance programme for Rwanda. Why has that recommendation — favourable to a needy Member of the United Nations — not been implemented?

I should like to take this opportunity to welcome the recent report of the Security Council mission to the Great Lakes region, which recognized Rwanda's security concerns. We recall that the Rwandese troops who are present in the Democratic Republic of the Congo are there only because of the security problems of Rwanda and its people. I should also like to reaffirm my Government's commitment to supporting all provisions of the Lusaka Agreement, as well as its commitment to withdraw its troops from the Democratic Republic of the Congo once the question of disarmament, demobilization, reintegration and repatriation or resettlement (DDRRR) is settled. This morning, the representative of Bangladesh referred to the withdrawal of Namibian troops from the Democratic Republic of the Congo. The Namibian presence was merely symbolic. Namibia has no border with the Democratic Republic of the Congo, has no security problems with the Democratic Republic of the Congo and therefore is not concerned with the DDRRR programme, which is one of the sine qua non conditions for the withdrawal of foreign troops from the Democratic Republic of the Congo.

In conclusion, I should like to congratulate our brother and friend, Assistant Secretary-General Ibrahima Fall, on his new duties. We wish him every success.

The President: The next speaker is the representative of Costa Rica. I invite her to take a seat at the Council table and to make her statement.

Mrs. Chassoul (Costa Rica) (*spoke in Spanish*): Allow me to start by congratulating you, Sir, on your well-deserved presidency of the Council for the month of May. Costa Rica admires the work carried out by Singapore over the past 18 months as a non-permanent member of this organ. We have noted Ambassador Mahbubani's leadership and the constructive and critical role played by his delegation. We believe that his work clearly demonstrates the importance of the presence within this organ of smaller countries in guaranteeing its effectiveness and legitimacy.

We welcome the convening of this interactive meeting on the work of the ad hoc Working Group on

Conflict Prevention and Resolution in Africa as an opportunity to have a candid exchange of views with its Chairman, Ambassador Jagdish Koonjul, and the other members of the Security Council. We are also grateful for the 13 May letter of Ambassadors Mahbubani and Koonjul, setting out clear guidelines for this debate. That useful document, which has helped us to focus our statements and to define the contents of the debate, is a sound precedent that should be maintained.

Costa Rica fully supports United Nations monitoring of electoral processes in Africa. We recognize that this activity has facilitated the peaceful settlement of various conflicts, not only in Africa, but also on all the continents. Suffice it to recall the examples of El Salvador, Cambodia, Kosovo and the Central African Republic, where the United Nations played an indispensable role in preparing and coordinating elections held following the end of the respective armed conflicts.

We must, however, be realistic about this task. Democracy cannot be built in a day. The existence of electoral mechanisms does not guarantee the existence of genuine democracy, which is a long-term and continuous process, requiring ongoing efforts of coordination and concertation, respect for the will of the majority and for the rights of minorities, understanding and negotiation. Genuine democracy exists only within a flourishing culture of mutual respect and when there is general acceptance of both the existence of common principles and objectives and of legitimate differences of opinion and legal avenues for dissent.

The United Nations can cooperate in holding clean and fair elections in post-conflict situation in three different ways. First, the Organization can cooperate directly in the preparation and holding of elections. Its experience in this field is considerable, ranging from the provision of security for electoral centres to the preparation of electoral roles. Secondly, the United Nations can cooperate in demilitarizing the electoral process in order to avert fraud, voter intimidation and violence during the voting process. To that end, it is necessary to demobilize and disarm ex-combatants. Thirdly, the Organization can help political leaders to respect the outcome of the electoral process. To that end, it is essential to create institutional mechanisms to guarantee the legitimacy of elections and to provide peaceful resolutions of ideological, political and economic differences. These tasks require careful preparation and implementation. United Nations involvement during the transitional period is crucial in this respect.

Moreover, assistance in and monitoring of electoral processes should not be confined solely to the first series of elections in a post-conflict period, but should extend throughout the period of democratic consolidation. Holding one election does not indicate a return to normalcy; on the contrary, it is only the first step towards a democratic existence. Unfortunately, the international community often considers that its work is done once the first elections are over. Experience has shown that this conclusion is wrong.

We believe that the United Nations should provide assistance to consolidate democracy on an ongoing basis. Our Organization should promote both the strengthening of social and political mechanisms that promote free competition through periodic elections, as well as transparent, responsible and open governance. It should promote the dissemination and deepening of democracy in all spheres of society. It is necessary in parallel to ensure that the democratic process is not distorted or corrupted by leaders who foment discord in order to promote their private ambitions at the expense of the well-being of the community.

As regards coordination between the Security Council and the Economic and Social Council, we feel that it is essential to improve the activities of each organ in conflict prevention and resolution on the African continent. Their respective mandates press them to adopt specific measures and recommendations to improve the political, economic, social and military situations of the continent. Nonetheless, we must not forget that those two bodies have clearly distinct attributions and competencies.

The Security Council has a mandate to maintain international peace and security in the face of political and legal disputes and armed threats to peace. The Economic and Social Council, however, is mandated to promote economic and social development and universal respect for human rights. To the extent that each organ carries out its respective tasks in full, their efforts will reinforce each other and bear optimal fruit. If economic and social development and full respect for human rights are not achieved, however, a lasting peace will not be achieved in Africa. At the same time,

while armed conflict persists, it will be impossible to achieve true economic and social development on the continent. That is why it would be desirable to increase the level of cooperation and coordination between the two organs, thereby effectively implementing Article 65 of the Charter.

The question is, therefore, how to enhance that interrelationship. In recent years, various initiatives have been undertaken to allow some members of the Economic and Social Council to attend meetings of the Security Council and vice versa. Last year, a plenary meeting of the two organs on an equal footing was unsuccessfully mooted. Were those proposals to be implemented, they would improve communication between the two organs, although they would not, per se, guarantee better coordination of their operational activities. Regrettably, the mere exchange of information or coordination of independently developed activities is insufficient.

In order to develop true synergy between the efforts of the Economic and Social Council and the Security Council, their activities must be coordinated from the very moment when they are first developed and proposed. A common and detailed strategy must be crafted within which the activities of the two organs will coincide and complement each other. Decisions cannot continue to be adopted in isolation. We must create a framework within which members of the two organs can jointly assess the situation in Africa in all its aspects and can together design a common strategy in response. Further, the members of the Security Council and of the Economic and Social Council should jointly, with representatives of the Secretariat, evaluate the activities that the two organs are already carrying out in Africa. They should then decide what improvements to the existing instruments and mechanisms are required. In essence, what is required is a period of serious reflection, long-term vision, constructive criticism and genuine joint efforts. We believe that a series of periodic seminars or retreats, bringing together representatives of the States members of both organs and the Secretariat would be a first step in that direction.

We should not delude ourselves by thinking that greater coordination between the two organs will automatically improve the effectiveness of the United Nations in promoting peace and development in Africa. The real problem is not a lack of coordination but a lack of resources and a lack of clear goals and concrete mandates.

If economic, technical and human resources are not allocated and if the indispensable political support is not forthcoming, peacekeeping in Africa cannot be effective. One cannot build peace if one does not tackle the underlying causes of conflicts. The development of democracy requires not only the establishment of electoral mechanisms but also a long process of cultivating a democratic culture.

Sustainable development is impossible if the necessary resources are not provided for economic development, poverty alleviation and unemployment and without access to international markets. Social development requires the inclusion of human rights as a guiding principle of national policy. The task is enormous and requires the firm and resolute support of the entire international community.

The problem of the lack of coordination is not limited to the relations between the Security Council and the Economic and Social Council, but can be found in all endeavours of the international community in which various actors are attempting to prevent or resolve conflicts. We have sometimes seen how countries with influence on the parties, various international organizations, diverse groups of mediators, the United Nations and non-governmental organizations promote contradictory or redundant initiatives. In the area of emergency humanitarian assistance, one can find some projects with an excess of resources while others, equally important, are neglected. Those difficulties are aggravated by the duplication of mandates, competition for resources and influence and a multiplicity of political goals.

A possible solution to the coordination issue is the creation of groups of friendly countries. But that is an instrument that can be used only if the number of actors is small, if those actors possess a high degree of political commitment and if their interests generally converge. If those conditions do not exist, such a mechanism will not work. Furthermore, groups of friends should never replace the Security Council as the main centre for decision-making on behalf of the international community.

Alternatively, increasing the authority of the Secretary-General's Special Representatives might solve some of the coordination problems. The most successful Special Representatives have been those

who served as go-betweens among the countless international actors and who, in that fashion, were able to channel various efforts in the field. We believe that this function of the Special Representative should be institutionalized. However, we are aware that the task is hindered by a lack of coordination among the capitals and by the competition and rivalry among the various actors and organs. Special Representatives will be able to effectively coordinate international actions only when all the actors effectively recognize the primacy of the United Nations on the issue of conflict prevention and resolution and when those actors subordinate their narrow interests to the goals and strategies adopted by the Security Council.

Considering the terrible consequences of armed conflicts for the peoples of Africa, we believe that those conflicts must be prevented before they break out. That requires an ongoing and sustained effort by the African peoples themselves and by their leaders in order to create an atmosphere of mutual respect and of the rejection of violence. It is indispensable to ensure decent living conditions for all the continent's inhabitants to satisfy their basic needs, ensure respect for fundamental rights and enable them to resolve their differences democratically. What is needed is a firm policy of strengthening civil authorities and reducing spending on arms, redirecting military spending towards education, health, housing and social investment.

Today we see positive signs of a better future for the people of Africa. We have witnessed the end of some armed conflicts, the strengthening of democratic institutions and growing respect for human rights and democratic legitimacy. African leaders are increasingly active in the prevention and resolution of the conflicts afflicting their continent at the same time as they are promoting the economic and social development of their peoples. The international community and the Security Council have the obligation to fully support them.

The President: The next speaker inscribed on my list is the representative of Ethiopia. I invite him to take a seat at the Council table and to make his statement.

Mr. Hussein (Ethiopia): My delegation wishes to thank the Singaporean presidency for convening this meeting. I do not think it is a coincidence that during Singapore's presidency Africa has occupied a high place on the agenda of the Security Council; this is due to the importance that Singapore attaches to the problems of Africa. Mr. President, your own presence further confirms that fact. Like some of my predecessors who spoke on this subject, I would like to say that you have an excellent team here at the United Nations. It is ably led by Ambassador Kishore Mahbubani. My delegation also wishes to thank the Chairman of the ad hoc Working Group on Conflict Prevention and Resolution in Africa, Ambassador Jagdish Koonjul, for his excellent work, which definitely led to the convening of this Security Council meeting today.

I also welcome the presence of the President of the Economic and Social Council, Ambassador Šimonović, Ambassador Kébé of the Organization of African Unity and my good friend Assistant Secretary-General Ibrahima Fall, whom I wish well in his new task in Dakar.

Uncharacteristically, allow me to thank all those members of the Security Council who are still persevering and staying with us until almost 9 p.m. I also wish to thank the speakers remaining on the list. I would especially like to thank the Ambassadors who have stayed — the Ambassador and Permanent Representative of the Syrian Arab Republic and, until very recently, the Ambassador of Norway. They deserve special thanks, at least from my delegation, for having stayed.

I do not have a prepared statement as such, which would have been distributed to you. After having listened to many statements, I fully endorse the statement made by South Africa. Ethiopia's formal statement has been made by South Africa. I am now just adding a few points.

The United Kingdom mentioned lessons learned. I am going to dwell on lessons learned and things that we, the Ethiopian delegation, feel that the Council and the rest of us should really look at. Some of it may not be flattering to the Council, so please bear with me.

Many have spoken very positively about the Ethiopia-Eritrea conflict having been successfully resolved. We are very happy with the peace agreement signed in Algiers and with the Boundary Commission's decision, which both countries have accepted. This is very positive. But if we go back and ask, could this conflict have been prevented? The answer is, yes, of course. I do not want to enter a debate on this. Since I

do not see my Eritrean friends here, I will not indulge in that. But it could have been avoided. The role of the Council, in our view, should have been more vigorous in supporting the role of the Organization of African Unity (OAU), which took a very good initial step through its conflict resolution mechanism. But it was not supported at the beginning. The OAU, the regional organization, did not have the full, vigorous support of the Council. I am saying that the Council could have prevented that conflict; the conflict whose successful resolution is now referred to by all.

Other lessons learned have related to coordination by external actors. That is very important. Some members have also mentioned that. Regarding coordination or the lack of it, as some delegations, such as the Djibouti delegation, have pointed out, if there is good coordination, there is the interest of a big Power. That is unfortunate, but that is the case. In Sierra Leone, which had the support of the regional organization, the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS), we have had a positive and happy outcome. I congratulate my brothers and sisters in Sierra Leone on their successful election.

In other cases where this has not been the case, such as Somalia, Sudan and the Democratic Republic of the Congo, the conflicts have not been resolved. There are many actors and various initiatives. That is another point I wish to make. We should avoid having too many initiatives by various parties, some of which have differing or conflicting interests. The Council sometimes looks askance at this and keeps its distance, unless it is nudged by a powerful interest. Of course, all Permanent Representatives of members on the Council will stay until 9 p.m. even, if something of great interest to them is being considered.

The Council imposes sanctions. I am referring here not only to economic sanctions, but to sanctions in general. That is all right if they are imposed for good reasons. But the Council should not impose sanctions, if it does ensure follow-up, because then they will be disregarded by everyone. That is the case with weapons sanctions, and there are many other examples that can be cited.

The Council should not take action when one party is clearly at fault. The Brahimi report on peacekeeping tells us that one of the lessons to be learned is that a spade should be called a spade. The Council does not do that in some cases, which helps conflicts to continue. What sometimes happens is that the Council takes sides, even in deciding who the parties to a conflict are to the exclusion of others. In cases where there is a clear culprit, such as the case of UNITA in Angola, nothing has been done. Of course they continue. Other circumstances are, hopefully, now helping the resolution of that problem.

The role of the Economic and Social Council has been emphasized. The new direction and collaboration that is developing between the Council and the Economic and Social Council is welcome. There is also the need for very strong coordination between the various United Nations specialized agencies, which does not exist. It has not existed before the conflict, during the conflict and after the conflict.

I will conclude by making one recommendation. It is good that the Council occasionally visits countries or regions in conflict. That practice must be continued, in the view of my delegation. However, my delegation would also like to recommend that the Council sometimes hold its meetings away from Headquarters in New York. The Council has done that on two occasions. The first was in January 1972, in Africa, at the OAU headquarters in Addis Ababa. The other time — if I am not incorrect — was the following year in 1973, in Panama. This is a good practice. I think it will also give the Council an inside perspective on places other than New York. Maybe the Council should also hold those meetings when the weather in New York is too cold.

The President: I call on the representative of the Central African Republic. I invite him to take a seat at the Council table and to make his statement.

Mr. Poukré-Kono (Central African Republic) (*spoke in French*): The delegation of the Central African Republic welcomes the proposed agenda, and we would like to share with the Council part of our modest experience.

Allow me, at the outset, to congratulate you, Sir, on your presidency during this month. Your presence is evidence of the sympathy and interest that your country, Singapore, has for the cause of sustainable development in Africa through the resolution of conflicts there. I also would like to thank Ambassador Lavrov of the Russian Federation, who very ably conducted the work of the Council during the previous month.

I appreciate the conduct of this work because it is interactive and strengthens the will of members and non-members of the Council to find compromise solutions to the difficult issues confronting Africa.

My delegation is pleased with the very informative presentations made by Ambassador Koonjul, Chairman of the ad hoc Working Group on prevention and resolution of conflicts in Africa, by Ambassador Kébé of the Organization of African Unity (OAU) and by Ambassador Šimonović, President of the Economic and Social Council. The statement of Assistant Secretary-General Ibrahima Fall, full of reflective thoughts, could enable greater coordination between the Security Council and the Working Group in order to respond to some pending issues that merit a just and lasting solution.

Africa is facing huge problems of great complexity, and their appropriate solution requires an integrated and comprehensive approach. Wherever the crises are, the same problems include poverty, HIV/AIDS, refugees, drought and famine.

It is very encouraging to note also that it is the African leaders themselves who are the first to do something about outbreaks of tension and conflict. My country, the Central African Republic, has been the scene of repeated crises in the past years. It was the first country in the African continent to receive great attention by African leaders, and this was very reassuring. The establishment on the ground of an inter-African force (MISAB) for the monitoring of the Bangui Agreements, followed by the United Nations Mission in the Central African Republic (MINURCA) and, finally, the United Nations Peace-building Office in the Central African Republic (BONUCA) certainly contributed to an improvement in the security situation.

We thank all African countries, friendly nations on other continents, the European Union, United Nations bodies and OAU bodies, near and far, that helped us to gradually re-establish national unity. However, I believe that MINURCA has not fully accomplished its mandate. Whereas the Central African Government wanted the extension of its mandate, its hasty retreat left a hint of lack of conviction that was witnessed by the international community. Why did MINURCA withdraw even though there was no political stability, even though a lot remained to be done in the political, social, economic and cultural areas? The Central African Republic, the patient, was still recovering when the doctor left the room.

A special meeting on cooperation with the Central African Republic was held in May 2000, where some promises of external aid were recorded. Repeated calls were made to have programmes that had been stopped made operational. Again, the implementation of the foreign aid promised was pitiful, just when the Central African Government was making progress. The question remains: is it possible to carry out national programmes while a country is trying to be reborn from its ashes?

To give an example: is it possible to implement a demobilization programme during the transitional period of seeking peace — that is, between the end of the conflict and the beginning of development? It is now nearly a year ago, on 27 May 2001, that there was an attempted coup in Bangui, and that, too, jeopardized normal life. Again, it was African countries that showed their concern.

Thanks to members of the Community of Sahelo-Saharan States (CENSAD), the reestablishment of peace is gradually happening. The Acting Chairman of CENSAD, the representative of the Libyan Arab Jamahiriya, spoke very eloquently. Its actions should be supported by the Security Council.

We are gathered here to think about what the work of the ad hoc Working Group should be. It is working successfully and has a very busy programme. What we expect of it is concrete work within the framework of the various Security Council resolutions on African conflicts. It is clear that African issues dominate the Council's agenda. Voices more eloquent than mine have raised in this Chamber the question of the implementation of Security Council resolutions. Taking the Central African crisis as an example, we have the impression that the Council has grown tired of this conflict, although it made enormous efforts to establish MINURCA to do the job, but then it was quickly eliminated while the situation on the ground was still risky.

A post-conflict State does not mean a peaceful State. The reestablishment of peace is a slow, long but certain process. I would like to thank all speakers and those who spoke about the case of the Central African Republic, whose experience has not been very convincing. The involvement of regional organizations in conflicts, in accordance with Chapter VIII of the

United Nations Charter, is very important. Nor should we forget the impact of non-governmental organizations, which are increasingly playing the role of mediator in national crises.

The work of the ad hoc Working Group, which we are considering, should save as a catalyst for the work of various ad hoc groups created in various places to find solutions to African crises. We do not want yet another working group that would duplicate the same functions in another programme. This Working Group, which would work in concert with the Security Council, the Economic and Social Council and other regional and subregional organizations, should be able to establish priorities and deadlines. I am afraid that there might be some risk of overlapping in the work and the objectives, but my delegation believes that this new group might make a difference, compared to other groups previously created. Transparency and vigilance should be major assets. No regional organization should refuse to cooperate with this Group. Its work will play a crucial role in allowing the voices of countries confronting conflicts to be heard.

My delegation will work in close cooperation with the ad hoc Working Group, the establishment of which, we believe, is very welcome for all of us. We fully support its work programme and the role that the Security Council continues to play in this regard.

Before concluding, I would like to take this opportunity to congratulate, to encourage and to wish full success to Mr. Ibrahima Fall, who will be starting his new functions in the coming months.

The President: Before I deliver my concluding remarks, I would like to give the floor to His Excellency Mr. Jagdish Koonjul.

Mr. Koonjul (Mauritius): Mr. President, since you are going to be summarizing today's discussions, I will take the floor very briefly simply to comment on some of the points that have been raised.

First of all, I would like to thank all the speakers for their contributions and for their kind words addressed to me and to the members of the Working Group. Certain comments that they have made have already been answered by our colleagues in the Security Council. We are very much encouraged by the wide support for the ad hoc Working Group and for the programme of work that we have submitted. We are very appreciative of the comments that have been made, and we are certainly going to take them on board as we consider the future work of our Working Group.

Let me just take one or two points that have been raised and comment briefly on them. First of all, it is agreed by one and all that there needs to be greater coordination between the Security Council and regional and subregional organizations. I think this point was made by almost all of the speakers. Therefore, there is a need to have very close coordination and contact, both with the Organization of African Unity (OAU) itself and with all the other subregional organizations.

Another proposal was made to invite, whenever possible, the executive heads of subregional organizations. I want to just say that this idea is very much on our mind, because this Working Group is an informal one, and we are obviously in a position to invite whoever can help to contribute to the work of the Working Group. Likewise, the ad hoc Working Group is going to be open — and I think the question of transparency and openness has been stressed. We should be able to meet with anyone who can contribute, as well as with those countries that are directly concerned with any subject under discussion. I just want to reassure members who have raised these points.

The other point that has been stressed is preventive actions and the possibility of using the subregional organizations as a means to get early warning on conflicts. We can also assure members that we will certainly look into that.

When Mr. Ibrahima Fall made his statement early this morning he mentioned the close contact that exists already between the Secretary General of the Organization of African Unity (OAU) and our Secretary-General and also between the United Nations Secretariat and OAU secretariat. That is very true. They do meet every six months, once in New York and once when there is a meeting of the OAU Summit.

But we have not found the same kind of contact between the Security Council and the OAU Office. This is why I think we will now have to work much harder with the OAU, and especially with the OAU Observer Office here. I think the point has also been made that we have to be very clear about initiatives which are taken, because very often there can be divergence of views and policies as to what the OAU and the Security Council might be doing. So it will be extremely important to have a special channel of

communication, as Mr. Fall puts it, between the Security Council and the OAU Central Organ.

One question was asked by the distinguished Ambassador of Benin. It was rather a point of clarification that he was looking for with regard to what we had in mind with respect to election observation. This is a pretty sensitive issue. We have all felt in the Working Group that very often democratic elections are the beginning of a peace process, such as what we are doing in Sierra Leone. Now there are going to be elections and hopefully there is going to peace after that. But in some cases, elections have been at the very origin of conflicts, as is the case, for example, in Madagascar. The idea here is not only to observe elections at the last stages, when the elections are actually taking place, but to help with the electoral process right from the beginning. The Ambassador of Benin clearly pointed out how important it is that electoral lists be up to date at the time that they are prepared and renewed, because that is the time when the whole election process can be defeated. The idea would be therefore to assist any Member State, obviously at its request, in the whole electoral process, right from the beginning all the way until the end. There is also the question of coordination of the observation between OAU observers, United Nations observers and occasionally European Union observers.

The other important issue that has been mentioned is the question of illicit traffic in small arms and the implementation of the recommendations of the Panel of Experts on this issue. Here I just want to say that the Working Group, as we said earlier, is not going to be duplicating the work of the Security Council or any other body. This is definitely an important issue, but we feel that this matter is being addressed in other forums and other groups.

Somebody also mentioned the question of mercenaries, and that is also a matter that needs to be addressed. What we are going to try to do at the level of the Working Group is to revisit this issue and see whether the Working Group should be taking upon itself the work of trying to deal with the question of illicit trafficking in small weapons.

The final point is the importance, which everybody has been stressing, of having very close contact with the Economic and Social Council in order to have very special working relations with the advisory group on African countries coming out of conflicts. What we need to do here is not only to enhance the cooperation, but also, as Ambassador Greenstock puts it, to make sure that we see the results on the ground. We certainly look forward to working very closely with Ambassador Ivan Šimonović on this matter, and we hope very soon to be able to have him attend one of our meetings and share his views on this.

These are the few points that I wanted to make at this stage.

The President: In my concluding remarks, let me first thank all the speakers for the kind words addressed to my delegation and to myself. It has been a great honour for Singapore to have chaired this meeting on such an important subject. Having personally served as Permanent Representative to the United Nations 30 years ago, it has been a pleasure and privilege for me to have interacted with distinguished Permanent Representatives during this week.

When I opened the meeting this morning, I indicated that at the end of the debate I would try to draw on some specific conclusions from our discussions, which I hope will feed into the future work of the Council's Working Group on Africa, as well as the work of the Council on African issues. I also hope to further refine these points and distribute them eventually to Member States on my own responsibility.

Before drawing these conclusions I would like to once again thank Ambassador Jagdish Koonjul, Ambassador Amadou Kébé, Ambassador Ivan Šimonović and Assistant Secretary-General Ibrahima Fall for their excellent contributions. On behalf of the Security Council, let me also express our deep appreciation to Assistant Secretary-General Mr. Ibrahima Fall for the invaluable contributions that he has made to the work of the Security Council. We have immensely benefited from his incisive analysis of issues and his tremendous vision. We wish him all the best in his new endeavours.

There can be no doubt that we have had today a rich debate. When Mauritius and Singapore sent out their letter of invitation to all Members, we really had no idea that this invitation would receive such an overwhelming response, 35 non-members addressing the Council. It indicates that there is a great desire on the part of the membership to give input and recommendations to the Council's work on Africa.

It is not an easy task in a brief summary to capture the many points that were made today. My remarks should therefore be viewed as a first step towards culling the important points made today. I shall divide my remarks into two parts. Firstly, I shall try to draw some general points that were made. Secondly, I shall list some of the specific suggestions that were put across for the ad hoc Working Group to follow up on. I apologize in advance if I have left out any major points made by speakers, but will capture these points in a consolidated summary

Several general points were made. Firstly, as President of the Economic and Social Council, Ambassador Ivan Šimonović said effective strategies to deal with conflict prevention and recovery require a comprehensive approach. Indeed, this is probably one of the main conclusions we could draw from today's debate. Many speakers observe that there had been a series of initiatives on Africa, ranging from the broad initiative of the New Partnership for Africa's Development (NEPAD) to more specific initiatives. A challenge is to ensure that all these initiatives work together coherently. Here, too, the ad hoc Working Group could make a valuable contribution.

The second general point that emerged was a strong appeal made by non-members for Council members to consider carefully all the points of view put forward today, especially by African Member States. I have no doubt that Council members have listened carefully to the points that have been made and requested by the African Group. Some members of the Council have also responded to these points. As a result, we have had a rich and interactive dialogue. But, then, dialogue is not an end in itself. Several speakers have emphasized that the Council needs to work out a partnership with African States so as to respond to African challenges. We hope that the healthy dialogue we have had today will help create the partnership that many have called for.

Thirdly, it was suggested that the Working Group could work out a balance sheet of successes, failures and lessons learned in tackling the problems in Africa. Ambassador Greenstock, for example, suggested a lessons-learned exercise on Sierra Leone. I am citing only one example, but many other concrete examples were offered for lessons-learned exercises.

Fourthly, it was suggested that, unlike the Security Council — which tends to be more formal and more reactive — the Working Group was an informal and ad hoc body and could be more proactive and could experiment with innovative measures. That was suggested by the Chairman of the African Group, the Permanent Representative of Benin, and his suggestion may be worth reflecting on.

Fifthly, there was broad agreement among all speakers that the Working Group should not duplicate the work carried out by the Security Council; rather, it should assist the Security Council in its work and should provide value-added contributions.

I should now like to turn to some of the specific suggestions that were conveyed today to the ad hoc Working Group. Those specific suggestions relate to the seven items outlined in the ad hoc Working Group's programme of work.

With regard to the Economic and Social Council, the following suggestions were made: that the Working Group could appoint a representative to work with the Economic and Social Council's ad hoc Advisory Group when it is created, in preparation for the high-level General Assembly meeting on Africa to be held on 16 September, which could include discussions on the New Partnership for Africa's Development (NEPAD); that there is a need for the Working Group to adopt an integrated approach and to ensure a smooth transition from peacekeeping to peace-building, another area for cooperation between the Security Council and the Economic and Social Council; and that cooperation between the Working Group and the Economic and Social Council could address the failure of partnerships between members of the United Nations family and could help to address the economic and social causes of conflict.

On confidence-building in the Mano River region, it was suggested that the Council should listen to the views of African regional organizations, such as the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS), on what needs to be done for the region; and that the Working Group could look for joint solutions affecting the three Mano River Union countries — for example, joint disarmament, demobilization and reintegration programmes, a joint plan of action against the illicit arms trade, and possibly a rationalization of the posts of the two Special Representatives of the Secretary-General.

On the role of Special Representatives of the Secretary-General in Africa, it was suggested that the

Special Representatives should work closely with each other despite their different geographical mandates, especially in the field of preventive diplomacy.

On assistance to electoral processes, while speakers noted that the Security Council had no direct role in elections observation, the Working Group could reflect on formulating rules acceptable to all concerning a possible partnership between the Secretaries-General of the United Nations and of the Organization of African Unity (OAU) to observe electoral processes in the months preceding elections, during elections and during the announcement of results. That will obviously require careful consideration. The Working Group should also help to ensure that the Council remains seized of the situation in conflict areas, even after successful elections. Premature withdrawal from such areas in the past led to the re-emergence of factors that could embroil States in yet another conflict.

On the establishment of groups of friends, speakers noted that groups of friends were a good idea, particularly useful for gathering information on specific situations and in the areas of mediation and providing good offices. However, they could not replace the Council in its work.

On the question of cooperation with the OAU and subregional organizations, there was a particularly rich discussion. One suggestion was that the Working Group should facilitate the circulation of all OAU Central Organ decisions and those of other security organs of subregional organizations as Security Council documents to ensure their effective implementation. There was also a suggestion that the Working Group should facilitate periodic interaction and dialogue between the Council and the OAU, and that there could be regular exchanges of early-warning information between the Working Group and the OAU.

On the question of inviting non-governmental organizations and academics to join the Group's work, many speakers noted that this was useful to their exchanges in seminars involving non-governmental organizations and think tanks and it could contribute to the Council's decision-making.

As I said, this brief summary cannot do justice to the rich debate that we had today. Earlier, my officers had given me a long list of suggestions to mention in my concluding remarks, but, given the lateness of the hour, I could mention only a few of them. I am also pleased to inform the Council that my summary will be posted on the Singapore Mission's web site, and that later we will post a more detailed record of all the main points that were made during today's debate.

The main purpose of today's debate was to provide a stepping stone for the Council to continue focusing actively on the many challenges that we face in Africa. We hope that, when the next debate is held on this subject, members will refer to the rich debate we had today. In that connection, I am pleased to hear that the United Kingdom will be building on the results of today's debate during its July presidency.

Finally, I should like to thank all participants for their participation and for their contributions to the debate.

There are no further speakers on my list. The Security Council has thus concluded the present stage of its consideration of the item on its agenda.

The meeting rose at 9.30 p.m.